

THE 77864
ARGOSY

A Magazine of Tales, Travels, Essays, and Poems.

CHRISTMAS VOLUME
1866



STRAHAN & CO., MAGAZINE-PUBLISHERS
56, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON

ARGOSY

1861 1862

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET
AND CHANCERY CROSS.

THE ARGOSY.

GRIFFITH GAUNT.

BY CHARLES READE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AT the fair the wrestling was ended, and the tongues going over it all again, and throwing the victors; the greasy pole, with leg of mutton attached by ribbons, was being hoisted, and the swings flying, and the lads and lasses footing it to the fife and tabor, and the people chattering in groups; when the clatter of a horse's feet was heard, and a horseman burst in and rode recklessly through the market place; indeed, if his noble horse had been as rash as he was, some would have been trampled under foot. The rider's face was ghastly: such as were not exactly in his path, had time to see it, and wonder how this terrible countenance came into that merry place. Thus, as he passed, shouts of dismay arose, and a space opened before him, and then closed behind him with a great murmur that followed at his heels.

Tom Leicester was listening, spell-bound, on the outskirts of the throng, to the songs and humorous tirades of a pedlar selling his wares; and was saying to himself, "I too will be a pedlar." Hearing the row, he turned round, and saw his master just coming down with that stricken face.

Tom could not decipher his own name in print or manuscript; and these are the fellows that beat us all at reading countenances: he saw in a moment that some great calamity had fallen on Griffith's head; and nature stirred in him. He darted to his master's side, and seized the bridle. "What is up?" he cried.

But Griffith did not answer, nor notice; his ears were almost deaf, and his eyes, great and staring, were fixed right ahead; and, to all appearance, he did not see the people: he seemed to be making for the horizon.

"Master! for the love of God, speak to me," cried Leicester. "What have they done to you? Whither be you going, with the face of a ghost?"

"Away, from the hangman," shrieked Griffith, still staring at the horizon. "Stay me not; my hands itch for their throats; my heart thirsts for their blood; but I'll not hang for a priest and a wanton." Then he suddenly turned on Leicester, "Let thou go, or —," and he lifted his heavy riding whip.

Then Leicester let go the rein, and the whip descended on the horse's flank; he went clattering furiously over the stones, and drove the thinner groups apart like chaff, and his galloping feet were soon heard fainter and fainter till they died away in the distance. Leicester stood gaping.

Griffith's horse, a black hunter of singular power and beauty, carried his wretched master well that day; he went on till sunset, trotting, cantering, and walking, without intermission; the whip ceased to touch him, the rein never checked him. He found he was the master, and he went his own way. He took his broken rider back into the county where he had been foaled. But a few miles from his native place they came to the "Packhorse," a pretty little road-side inn, with farm-yard and buildings at the back. He had often baited here in his infancy; and now, stiff and stumbling with fatigue, the good horse could not pass the familiar place; he walked gravely into the stable-yard, and there fairly came to an end; craned out his drooping head, crooked his limbs, and seemed of wood. And no wonder. He was ninety-three miles from his last corn.

Paul Carrick, a young farrier, who frequented the "Packhorse," happened just then to be lounging at the kitchen door, and saw him come in. He turned directly, and shouted into the house, "Ho! Master Vint, come hither. Here's Black Dick come home, and brought you a worshipful customer."

The landlord bustled out of the kitchen, crying, "They are welcome both." Then he came lowly louting to Griffith, cap in hand, and held the horse, poor immoveable brute; and his wife curtsied perseveringly at the door.

Griffith dismounted, and stood there looking like one in a dream.

"Please you come in, sir," said the landlady, smiling professionally.

He followed her mechanically.

"Would your worship be private? We keep a parlour for gentles."

"Ay, let me be alone," he groaned.

Mercy Vint, the daughter, happened to be on the stairs and heard him: the voice startled her, and she turned round directly to look at the speaker; but she only saw his back going into the room, and then he flung himself like a sack into the arm chair.

The landlady invited him to order supper: he declined. She pressed him. He flung a piece of money on the table, and told her savagely to score his supper, and leave him in peace.

She flounced out with a red face, and complained to her husband in the kitchen.

Harry Vint rung the crown piece on the table before he committed himself to a reply. It rang like a bell. "Churl or not, his coin is good," said Harry Vint, philosophically. "I'll eat his supper, dame, for that matter."

"Father," whispered Mercy, "I do think the gentleman is in trouble."

"And that is no business of mine, neither," said Harry Vint.

Presently the guest they were discussing called loudly for a quart of burnt wine.

When it was ready, Mercy offered to take it in to him. She was curious.

The landlord looked up rather surprised; for his daughter attended to the farm, but fought shy of the inn and its business.

"Take it, lass, and welcome for me," said Mrs. Vint, pettishly.

Mercy took the wine in, and found Griffith with his head buried in his hands.

She stood a while with the tray, not knowing what to do.

Then, as he did not move, she said softly, "The wine sir, an if it please you."

Griffith lifted his head, and turned two eyes clouded with suffering upon her; he saw a buxom, blooming, young woman, with remarkably dove-like eyes that dwelt with timid, kindly curiosity upon him. He looked at her in a half distracted way, and then put his hand to the mug. "Here's perdition to all false women!" said he, and tossed half the wine down at a single draught.

"Tis not to me you drink, sir," said Mercy, with gentle dignity. Then she curtsied modestly and retired, discouraged, not offended.

The wretched Griffith took no notice—did not even see he had repulsed a friendly visitor. The wine, taken on an empty stomach, soon stupified him, and he staggered to bed.

He awoke at day-break; and, oh the agony of that waking.

He lay sighing a while, with his hot skin quivering on his bones, and his heart like lead; then got up and flung his clothes on hastily, and asked how far to the nearest sea-port.

Twenty miles.

He called for his horse. The poor brute was dead lame.

He cursed that good servant for going lame. He walked round and round like a wild beast, chafing and fuming a while; then sank into a torpor of dejection, and sat with his head bowed on the table all day.

He ate scarcely any food; but drank wine freely, remarking, however, that it was false-hearted stuff; did him no good; and had no taste as wine used to have. "But nothing is what it was," said he. "Even I was happy once. But that seems years ago."

"Alas! poor gentleman; God comfort you," said Mercy Vint, and came, with the tears in her dove-like eyes, and said to her father, "To be sure his worship hath been crossed in love; and what could she be thinking of? Such a handsome, well-made gentleman!"

"Now that is a wench's first thought," said Harry Vint: "more likely lost his money, gambling, or racing. But, indeed, I think 'tis his head is disordered, not his heart. I wish the 'Packhorse' was quit of him, maugre his laced coat. We want no kill-joys here."

That night he was heard groaning, and talking, and did not come down at all.

So at noon Mrs. Vint knocked at his door: a weak voice bade her enter: she found him shivering, and he asked her for a fire.

She grumbled, out of hearing, but lighted a fire.

Presently his voice was heard hallooing: he wanted all the windows open: he was so burning hot.

The landlady looked at him, and saw his face was flushed and swollen : and he complained of pain in all his bones. She opened the windows, and asked him would he have a doctor sent for : he shook his head contemptuously.

However, towards evening, he became delirious, and raved and tossed, and rolled his head as if it was an intolerable weight he wanted to get rid of.

The females of the family were for sending at once for a doctor ; but the prudent Harry demurred.

"Tell me, first, who is to pay the fee," said he. "I've seen a fine coat with the pockets empty, before to-day."

The women set up their throats at him with one accord, each after her kind.

"Out, fie !" said Mercy ; "are we to do nought for charity ?"

"Why, there's his horse, ye foolish man," said Mrs. Vint.

"Ay, ye are both wiser than me," said Harry Vint, ironically. And soon after that he went out softly.

The next minute he was in the sick man's room, examining his pockets. To his infinite surprise he found twenty gold pieces, a quantity of silver, and some trinkets.

He spread them all out on the table and gloated on them with greedy eyes. They looked so inviting, that he said to himself, they would be safer in his custody than in that of a delirious person, who was even now raving incoherently before him, and could not see what he was doing. He therefore proceeded to transfer them to his own care.

On the way to his pocket, his shaking hand was arrested by another hand, soft, but firm as iron.

He shuddered, and looked round in abject terror ; and there was his daughter's face, pale as his own, but full of resolution. "Nay, father," said she ; "I must take charge of these : and well do you know why."

These simple words cowed Harry Vint, so that he instantly resigned the money and jewels, and retired, muttering that "things were come to a pretty pass,"—"a man was no longer master in his own house," etc. etc. etc.

While he inveighed against the degeneracy of the age, the women paid him no more attention than the age did, but just sent for the doctor. He came, and bled the patient. This gave him a momentary relief ; but when, in the natural progress of the disease, sweating and weakness came on, the loss of the precious vital fluid was fatal, and the patient's pulse became scarce perceptible. There he lay, with wet hair, and gleaming eyes, and haggard face, at death's door.

An experienced old crone was got to nurse him, and she told Mrs. Vint he would live maybe three days.

Paul Carrick used to come to the "Packhorse" after Mercy Vint, and, finding her sad, asked her what was the matter.

"What should it be," said she, "but the poor gentleman a-dying overhead ; away from all his friends."

"Let me see him," said Paul.

Mercy took him softly into the room.

"Ay, he is booked," said the farrier. "Doctor has taken too much blood out of the man's body. They kill a many that way."

"Alack, Paul! must he die? Can nought be done?" said Mercy, clasping her hands.

"I don't say that, neither," said the farrier. "He is a well-made man: he is young. I might save him, perhaps, if I had not so many beasts to look to. I'll tell you what you do. Make him soup as strong as strong; have him watched night and day, and let 'em put a spoonful of warm wine into him every hour, and then of soup; egg flip is a good thing, too; change his bed-linen, and keep the doctors from him: that is his only chance; he is fairly dying of weakness. But I must be off; Farmer Blake's cow is down for calving: I must give her an ounce of salts before 'tis too late."

Mercy Vint scanned the patient closely, and saw that Paul Carrick was right. She followed his instructions to the letter, with one exception. Instead of trusting to the old woman, of whom she had no very good opinion, she had the great arm-chair brought into the sick room, and watched the patient herself by night and day: a gentle hand cooled his temples; a gentle hand brought concentrated nourishment to his lips; and a mellow voice coaxed him to be good and swallow it. There are voices it is not natural to resist; and Griffith learned by degrees to obey this one, even when he was half unconscious.

At the end of three days this zealous young nurse thought she discerned a slight improvement, and told her mother so. Then the old lady came and examined the patient, and shook her head gravely. Her judgment, like her daughter's, was influenced by her wishes.

The fact is, both landlord and landlady were now calculating upon Griffith's decease. Harry had told her about the money and jewels, and the pair had put their heads together, and settled that Griffith was a gentleman highwayman, and his spoil would never be reclaimed after his decease, but fall to those good Samaritans, who were now nursing him, and intended to bury him respectably. The future being thus settled, this worthy couple became a little impatient; for Griffith, like Charles the Second, was "an unconscionable time dying."

We order dinner to hasten a lingering guest: and, with equal force of logic, mine host of the "Packhorse" spoke to White, the village carpenter, about a full-sized coffin: and his wife set the old crone to make a linen shroud, unobtrusively, in the bakehouse.

On the third afternoon of her nursing, Mercy left her patient, and called up the crone to tend him. She herself, worn out with fatigue, threw herself on a bed in her mother's room, hard by, and soon fell asleep.

She had slept about two hours when she was wakened by a strange noise in the sick chamber. A man and a woman quarrelling.

She bounded off the bed, and was in the room directly.

Lo and behold, there were the nurse and the dying man abusing one another like pickpockets.

The cause of this little misunderstanding was not far to seek. The old crone had brought up her work: videlicet, a winding-sheet all but finished, and certain strips of glazed muslin about three inches deep. She soon completed the winding-sheet, and hung it over two chairs in the patient's sight; she then proceeded to double the slips in six, and nick them; then she unrolled them, and they were frills, and well adapted to make the coming corpse absurd, and divest it of any little dignity the King of Terrors might bestow on it.

She was so intent upon her congenial task, that she did not observe the sick man had awakened, and was viewing her and her work with an intelligent but sinister eye.

"What is that you are making?" said he, grimly.

The voice was rather clear, and strong, and seemed so loud and strange in that still chamber, that it startled the woman mightily. She uttered a little shriek, and then was wrath. "Plague take the man!" said she; "how you scared me. Keep quiet, do; and mind your own business." [The business of going off the hooks.]

"I ask you what is that you are making," said Griffith, louder; and raising himself on his arm.

"Baby's frills," replied the woman, coolly, recovering that contempt for the understandings of the dying, which marks the veritable crone.

"Ye lie," said Griffith. "And there is a shroud. Who is that for?"

"Who should it be for, thou simple body? Keep quiet, do, till the change comes. 'Twon't be long now; art too well to last till sundown."

"So 'tis for me, is it?" screamed Griffith. "I'll disappoint ye yet. Give me my clothes. I'll not lie here to be measured for my grave, ye old witch."

"Here's manners!" cackled the indignant crone. "Ye foul-mouthed knave! is this how you thank a decent woman for making a comfortable corpse of ye, you that has no right to die in your shoes, let a be such dainties as muslin neck-ruff, and shroud of good Dutch flax."

At this Griffith discharged a volley in which "vulture," "hag," "blood-sucker," etc., blended with as many oaths: during which Mercy came in.

She glided to him, with her dove's eyes full of concern, and laid her hand gently on his shoulder: "You'll work yourself a mischief," said she; "leave me to scold her. Why, my good Nelly, how could ye be so hare-brained? prithee take all that trumpery away this minute: none here needeth it, nor shall not this many a year, please God."

"They want me dead," said Griffith to her, piteously, finding he had got one friend: and sunk back on his pillow exhausted.

"So it seems," said Mercy, cunningly. "But I'd baulk them finely. I'd up and order a beef-steak this minute."

"And shall," said Griffith, with feeble spite. "Leastways, do you order it, and I'll eat it:—d——n her!"

Sick men are like children; and women soon find that out, and manage them accordingly. In ten minutes Mercy brought a good rump-steak to the bedside, and said "Now for't. Marry come up, with her winding-sheets!"

Thus played upon, and encouraged, the great baby ate more than half the steak; and soon after perspired gently, and fell asleep.

Paul Carrick found him breathing gently, with a slight tint of red in his cheek; and told Mercy there was a change for the better. "We have brought him to a true intermission," said he; "so throw in the bark at once."

"What, drench his honour's worship!" said Mercy, innocently. "Nay, send thou the medicine, and I'll find womanly ways to get it down him."

Next day came the doctor, and whispered softly to Mrs. Vint, "How are we all upstairs?"

"Why couldn't you come afore?" replied Mrs. Vint, crossly. "Here's farrier Carrick stepped in, and curing him out of hand; the meddlesome body."

"A farrier rob me of my patient!" cried the doctor, in high dudgeon.

"Nay, good sir, 'tis no fault of mine. This Paul is a sort of a kind of a follower of our Mercy's: and she is mistress here, I trow."

"And what hath his farriership prescribed? Friar's balsam, belike."

"Nay, I know not; but you may soon learn, for he is above, physicking the gentleman (a pretty gentleman!) and suiting to our Mercy—after a manner."

The doctor declined to make one in so mixed a consultation.

"Give me my fee, dame," said he; "and as for this impertinent farrier, the patient's blood be on his head; and I'd have him beware the law."

Mrs. Vint went to the stair-foot, and screamed, "Mercy, the good doctor wants his fee. Who is to pay it, I wonder?"

"I'll bring it him anon," said a gentle voice: and Mercy soon came down and paid it with a willing air that half disarmed professional fury.

"'Tis a good lass, dame," said the doctor, when she was gone; "and, by the same token, I wish her better mated than to a scrub of a farrier."

Griffith, still weak, but freed of fever, woke one glorious afternoon, and heard a bird-like voice humming a quaint old ditty, and saw a field of golden wheat through an open window, and seated at that window the mellow songstress, Mercy Vint, plying her needle, with lowered lashes but beaming face, a picture of health and quiet womanly happiness. Things were going to her mind in that sick room.

He looked at her, and at the golden corn and summer haze beyond, and the tide of life seemed to rush back upon him.

"My good lass," said he, "tell me, where am I? for I know not."

Mercy started, and left off singing, then rose and came slowly towards him, with her work in her hand.

Innocent joy at this new symptom of convalescence flushed her comely features, but she spoke low.

"Good sir, at the 'Packhorse,'" said she, smiling.

"The 'Packhorse?' and where is that?"

"Hard by Allerton village."

"And where is that? not in Cumberland?"

"Nay, in Lancashire, your worship. Why, whence come you that know not the 'Packhorse,' nor yet Allerton township? Come you from Cumberland?"

"No matter whence I come. I'm going on board ship; like my father before me."

"Alas, sir, you are not fit; you have been very ill; and partly distraught."

She stopped: for Griffith turned his face to the wall with a deep groan. It had all rushed over him in a moment.

Mercy stood still, and worked on, but the water gathered in her eyes at that eloquent groan.

By-and-by Griffith turned round again, with a face of anguish, and filmy eyes, and saw her in the same place standing, working, and pitying.

"What, are *you* there still?" said he, roughly.

"Ay, sir; but I'll go, sooner than be troublesome. Can I fetch you anything?"

"No. Ay, wine; bring me wine to drown it all."

She brought him a pint of wine.

"Pledge me," said he, with a miserable attempt at a smile.

— She put the cup to her lips, and sipped a drop or two; but her dove's eyes were looking up at him over the liquor all the time. Griffith soon disposed of the rest; and asked for more.

"Nay," said she, "but I dare not: the doctor hath forbidden excess in drinking."

"The doctor! what doctor?"

"Doctor Paul," said she, demurely. "He hath saved your life, sir, I do think."

"Plague take him for that!"

"So say not I."

Here she left him with an excuse. "'Tis milking time, sir: and you shall know that I am our dairymaid. I seldom trouble the inn."

Next day she was on the window-seat, working and beaming. The patient called to her in peevish accents to put his head higher. She laid down her work with a smile, and came and raised his head.

"There, now, that is too high," said he: "how awkward you are."

"I lack experience, sir, but not good will. There, now, is that a little better?"

"Ay, a little. I'm sick of lying here: I want to get up. Dost hear what I say? I—want—to get up."

"And so you shall. As soon as ever you are fit. To-morrow, perhaps. To-day, you must e'en be patient. Patience is a rare medicine."

Tic, tic, tic! "What a noise they are making downstairs. Go, lass, and bid them hold their peace."

Mercy shook her head. "Good lack-a-day! we might as well bid the river give over running; but, to be sure, this comes of keeping a hostelry, sir. When we had only the farm, we were quiet, and did no ill to no one."

"Well, sing me, to drown their eternal buzzing: it worries me dead."

"Me sing! alack, sir, I'm no songster."

"That is false. You sing like a throble. I dote on music; and, when I was delirious, I heard one singing about my bed; I thought it was an angel at that time; but 'twas only you, my young mistress: and now I ask you, you say me nay. That is the way with you all. Plague take the girl, and all her d——d, unreasonable, hypocritical sex. I warrant me you'd sing if I wanted to sleep; and dance the devil to a standstill."

Mercy, instead of flouncing out of the room, stood looking on him with maternal eyes, and chuckling like a bird.

"That is right, sir: tax us all to your heart's content. O, but I'm a joyful woman to hear you; for 'tis a sure sign of mending when the sick take to rating of their nurses."

"In sooth, I am too cross-grained," said Griffith, relenting.

"Not a whit, sir, for my taste. I've been in care for you: and now you are a little cross, that maketh me easy."

"Thou art a good soul. Wilt sing me a stave after all?"

"La, you now; how you come back to that. Ay, and with a good heart: for, to be sure, 'tis a sin to gainsay a sick man. But indeed I am the homeliest singer. Methinks 'tis time I went down and bade them cook your worship's supper."

"Nay, I'll not eat nor sup till I hear thee sing."

"Your will is my law, sir," said Mercy, drily, and retired to the window-seat; that was the first obvious preliminary. Then she fiddled with her apron, and hem'd, and waited in hopes a reprieve might come; but a peevish, relentless voice demanded the song at intervals.

So then she turned her head carefully away from her hearer, lowered her eyes, and, looking the picture of guilt and shame all the time, sang an ancient ditty. The poltroon's voice was rich, mellow, clear, and sweet as honey; and she sang the notes for the sake of the words, not the words for the sake of the notes, as all but Nature's singers do.

The air was grave as well as sweet; for Mercy was of an old Puritan stock, and even her songs were not giddy-paced, but solid, quaint, and tender; all the more did they reach the soul.

In vain was the blushing cheek averted, and the honeyed lips: the ravishing tones set the birds chirping outside, yet filled the room within, and the glasses rang in harmony upon the shelf as the sweet singer poured out from her heart (so it seemed) the speaking song that begins thus—

In vain you tell your parting lover
You wish fair winds may waft him over.
Alas, what winds can happy prove
That bear me far from her I love?
Alas, what dangers on the main
Can equal those that I sustain
From slighted love and cold disdain?

Griffith beat time with his hand awhile, and his own face softened and beautified as the melody curled about his heart. But soon it was too much

for him; he knew the song; had sung it to Kate Peyton in their days of courtship. A thousand memories gushed in upon his soul and overpowered him. He burst out sobbing violently, and wept as if his heart must break.

"Alas! what have I done?" said Mercy: and the tears ran from her eyes at the sight. Then, with native delicacy, she hurried from the room.

What Griffith Gaunt went through that night, in silence, was never known but to himself. But the next morning he was a changed man. He was all dogged resolution: put on his clothes unaided, though he could hardly stand to do it; and borrowed the landlord's staff, and crawled out a smart distance into the sun. "It was kill or cure," said he. "I am to live, it seems. Well, then, the past is dead. My life begins again to-day."

Hen-like Mercy soon learned this sally of her refractory duckling, and was uneasy. So, for an excuse to watch him, she brought him out his money and jewels, and told him she had thought it safest to take charge of them.

He thanked her cavalierly, and offered her a diamond ring.

She blushed scarlet, and declined it; and even turned a meekly reproachful glance on at him with her dove's eyes.

He had a suit of russet made, and put away his fine coat, and forbade any one to call him "Your worship." "I am a farmer, like yourselves" said he; "and my name is—Thomas Leicester."

A brain fever either kills the unhappy lover, or else benumbs the very anguish that caused it.

And so it was with Griffith. His love got benumbed, and the sense of his wrongs vivid. He nursed a bitter hatred of his wife; only, as he could not punish her without going near her, and no punishment short of death seemed enough for her, he set to work to obliterate her from his very memory, if possible. He tried employment: he potted about the little farm, advising and helping, and that so zealously that the landlord retired altogether from that department, and Griffith, instead of he, became Mercy's ally, agricultural and bucolical. She was a shepherdess to the core, and hated the poor "Packhorse."

For all that, it was her fate to add to its attractions: for Griffith bought a viol da gambo, and taught her sweet songs, which he accompanied with such skill and, sometimes, with his voice, that good company often looked in on the chance of a good song sweetly sung and played.

The sick, in body or mind, are egotistical. Griffith was no exception: bent on curing his own deep wound, he never troubled his head about the wound he might inflict.

He was grateful to his sweet nurse, and told her so. And his gratitude charmed her all the more that it had been rather long in coming.

He found this dove-like creature a wonderful soother: he applied her more and more to his sore heart.

As for Mercy, she had been too good and kind to her patient not to take a tender interest in his convalescence. Our hearts warm more to those we

have been kind to, than to those who have been kind to us : and the female reader can easily imagine what delicious feelings stole into that womanly heart when she saw her pale nursing pick up health and strength under her wing, and become the finest, handsomest man in the parish.

Pity and admiration ; where these meet, love is not far behind.

And then this man, who had been cross and rough while he was weak, became gentler, kinder, and more deferential to her, the stronger he got.

Mrs. Vint saw they were both fond of each other's company, and disapproved it. She told Paul Carrick if he had any thought of Mercy he had better give over shilly-shallying, for there was another man after her. Paul made light of it at first. "She has known me too long to take up her head with a new comer," said he. "To be sure I never asked her to name the day ; but she knows my mind well enough, and I know hers."

"Then you know more than I do," said the mother, ironically.

He thought over this conversation, and very wisely determined not to run unnecessary risks : he came up one afternoon, and hunted about for Mercy, till he found her milking a cow in the adjoining paddock.

"Well, lass," said he, "I've good news for thee. My old dad says we may have his house to live in. So now you and I can yoke next month if ye will."

"Me turn the honest man out of his house !" said Mercy, mighty innocently.

"Who asks you ? He nobbut bargains for the chimney corner : and you are not the girl to begrudge the old man that."

"Oh no, Paul. But what would father do if I were to leave *his* house ? Methinks the farm would go to rack an ruin ; he is so wrapped up in his nasty public."

"Why, he has got a helper, by all accounts : and if you talk like that, you will never wed at all."

"Never is a big word. But I'm too young to marry yet. Jenny, thou jade, stand still."

The attack and defence proceeded upon these terms for some time ; and the defendant had one base advantage ; and used it. Her forehead was wedged tight against Jenny's ribs, and Paul could not see her face. This, and the feminine evasiveness of her replies, irritated him at last.

"Take thy head out o' the coow," said he, roughly, "and answer straight. Is all our wooing to go for nought ?"

"Wooing ? You never said so much to me in all these years, as you have to-day."

"Oh, ye knew my mind well enough. There's a many ways of showing the heart."

"Speaking out is the best, I trow."

"Why, what do I come here for twice a week, this two years past, if not for thee ?"

"Ay, for me, and father's ale."

"And thou canst look at me, and tell me that ? Ye false hard-hearted hussy. But, nay, thou wast never so : 'tis this Thomas Leicester hath bewitched thee, and set thee against thy true lover."

"Mr. Leicester pays no suit to me," said Mercy, blushing: "he is a right civil-spoken gentleman, and you know you saved his life."

"The more fool I. I wish I had known he was going to rob me of my lass's heart, I'd have seen him die a hundred times ere I'd have interfered. But they say if you save a man's life he'll make you rue it. Mercy, my lass, you are well respected in the parish; take a thought now: better be a farrier's wife than a gentleman's mistress."

Mercy did take her head "out of the cow" at this, and, for once, her cheek burned with anger; but the unwonted sentiment died before it could find words, and she said, quietly, "I need not be either, against my will."

Young Carrick made many such appeals to Mercy Vint; but he could never bring her to confess to him that he and she had ever been more than friends, or were now anything less than friends. Still he forced her to own to herself, that, if she had never seen Thomas Leicester, her quiet affection and respect for Carrick would probably have carried her to the altar with him.

His remonstrances, sometimes angry, sometimes tearful, awoke her pity, which was the grand sentiment of her heart, and disturbed her peace.

Moreover, she studied the two men in her quiet, thoughtful way, and saw that Carrick loved her with all his honest, though hitherto tepid heart; but Griffith had depths, and could love with more passion than ever he had shown for her. "He is not the man to have a fever by reason of me," said the poor girl, to herself. But I am afraid even this attracted her to Griffith; it nettled a woman's soft ambition; which is, to be as well loved as ever woman was.

And so things went on, and, as generally happens, the man who was losing ground went the very way to lose more. He spoke ill of Griffith behind his back: called him a highwayman, a gentleman, an ungrateful, undermining traitor. But Griffith never mentioned Carrick; and so when he and Mercy were together, her old follower was pleasingly obliterated, and affectionate good humour reigned. Thus Griffith, alias Thomas, became her sunbeam, and Paul her cloud.

But he who had disturbed the peace of others, his own turn came.

One day he found Mercy crying: he sat down beside her, and said, kindly, "Why, sweetheart, what is amiss?"

"No great matter," said she; and turned her head away, but did not check her tears, for it was new and pleasant to be consoled by Thomas Leicester.

"Nay, but tell me, child."

"Well, then, Jessie Carrick has been at me; that is all."

"The vixen! what did she say?"

"Nay, I'm not pleased enow with it to repeat it. She did cast something in my teeth."

Griffith pressed her to be more explicit: she declined, with so many blushes, that his curiosity was awakened, and he told Mrs. Vint, with some heat, that Jess Carrick had been making Mercy cry.

RECEIVED



GRIFFITH GAUNT.

See page 13.

"Like enow," said Mrs. Vint, coolly. "She'll eat her victuals all one for that, please God."

"Else I'll ring the cock-nosed jade's neck, next time she comes here," replied Griffith; "but, Dame, I want to know what she can have to say to Mercy to make her cry."

Mrs. Vint looked him steadily in the face for some time, and then and there decided to come to an explanation. "Ten to one 'tis about her brother," said she; "you know this Paul is our Mercy's sweetheart."

At these simple words Griffith winced, and his countenance changed remarkably. Mrs. Vint observed it, and was all the more resolved to have it out with him.

"Her sweetheart!" said Griffith. "Why I have seen them together a dozen of times, and not a word of courtship."

"Oh, the young men don't make many speeches in these parts. They show their hearts by act."

"By act? why I met them coming home from milking t' other evening. Mercy was carrying the pail, brimful; and that oaf sauntered by her side, with his hands in his pockets; was that the act of a lover?"

"I heard of it, sir," said Mrs. Vint, quietly; "and as how you took the pail from her, willy nilly, and carried it home. Mercy was vexed about it: she told me you panted at the door, and she was a deal fitter to carry the pail than you, that is just off a sick bed, like. But lawk, sir, ye can't go by the likes of that: the bachelors here they'd see their sweethearts carry the roof into next parish on their backs, like a snail, and never put out a hand; 'tis not the custom hereaway: but, as I was saying, Paul and our Mercy kept company, after a manner: he never had the wit to flatter her as should he, nor the stomach to bid her name the day, and he'd buy the ring; but he talked to her about his sick beasts more than he did to any other girl in the parish, and she'd have ended by going to church with him; only you came and put a coolness atween 'em."

"I! How?"

"Well, sir, our Mercy is a kind-hearted lass, though I say it, and you were sick, and she did nurse you; and that was a beginning. And, to be sure, you are a fine personable man, and capital company; and you are always about the girl; and, bethink you, sir, she is flesh and blood like her neighbours; and they say, once a body has tasted venison steak, it spoils their stomach for oat porridge. Now that is Mercy's case, I'm thinking; not that she ever said as much to me; she is too reserved. But, bless your heart, I'm forced to go about with eyes in my head, and watch 'em all a bit—me that keeps an inn."

Griffith groaned. "I'm a villain!" said he.

"Nay, nay," said Mrs. Vint. "Gentlefolks must be amused, cost what it may; but, hoping no offence, sir, the girl was a good friend to you in time of sickness; and so was this Paul, for that matter."

"She was," cried Griffith; "God bless her. How can I ever repay her?"

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Vint, "if that comes from your heart, you might

take our Mercy apart, and tell her you like her very well, but not enough to marry a farmer's daughter—don't say an innkeeper's daughter, or you'll be sure to offend her; she is bitter against the 'Packhorse.' Says you, 'This Paul is an honest lad, turn your heart back to him.' And, with that, mount your black horse and ride away, and God speed you, sir; we shall often talk of you at the 'Packhorse,' and nought but good."

Griffith gave the woman his hand, and his breast laboured visibly.

Jealousy was ingrained in the man. Mrs. Vint had pricked his conscience, but she had wounded his foible.

He was not in love with Mercy, but he esteemed her and liked her and saw her value, and, above all, could not bear another man should have her.

Now this gave the matter a new turn. Mrs. Vint had overcome her dislike to him long ago: still he was not her favourite. But his giving her his hand with a gentle pressure, and his manifest agitation, rather won her, and, as uneducated women are your true weathercocks, she went about directly. "To be sure," said she, "our Mercy is too good for the likes of him. She is not like Harry and me: she has been well brought up by her Aunt Prudence, as was governess in a nobleman's house. She can read and write, and cast accounts; good at her sampler, and can churn and make cheeses, and play of the viol, and lead the psalm in church, and dance a minuet, she can, with any lady in the land. As to her nursing in time of sickness, that I leave to you, sir."

"She is an angel," cried Griffith, "and my benefactress: no man living is good enough for her." And he went away, visibly discomposed.

Mrs. Vint repeated this conversation to Mercy, and told her Thomas Leicester was certainly in love with her. "Shouldst have seen his face, girl, when I told him Paul and you were sweethearts. 'Twas as if I had run a knife in his heart."

Mercy murmured a few words of doubt; but she kissed her mother eloquently, and went about, rosy and beaming, all that afternoon.

As for Griffith, his gratitude and his jealousy were now at war, and caused him a severe mental struggle.

Carrick, too, was spurred by jealousy, and came every day to the house, and besieged Mercy; and Griffith, who saw them together, and did not hear Mercy's replies, was excited, irritated, alarmed.

Mrs. Vint saw his agitation, and determined to bring matters to a climax. She was always giving him a side thrust; and, at last, she told him plainly that he was not behaving like a man. "If the girl is not good enough for you, why make a fool of her, and set her against a good husband?" And when he replied she was good enough for any man in England, "Then," said she, "why not show your respect for her as Paul Carrick does? He likes her well enough to go to church with her."

With the horns of this dilemma she so gored Kate Peyton's husband that, at last, she and Paul Carrick, between them, drove him out of his conscience.

So he watched his opportunity and got Mercy alone: he took her hand and told her he loved her, and that she was his only comfort in the world, and he found he could not live without her.

At this she blushed and trembled a little, and leaned her brow upon his shoulder, and was a happy creature for a few moments.

So far, fluently enough; but then he began to falter and stammer, and say that for certain reasons, he could not marry at all. But if she could be content with anything short of that, he would retire with her into a distant country, and there, where nobody could contradict him, would call her his wife, and treat her as his wife, and pay his debt of gratitude to her by a life of devotion.

As he spoke, her brow retired an inch or two from his shoulder; but she heard him quietly out, and then drew back and confronted him, pale, and, to all appearance, calm.

"Call things by their right names," said she. "What you offer me this day, in my father's house, is, to be your mistress. Then—God forgive you, Thomas Leicester."

With this oblique and feminine reply, and one look of unfathomable reproach from her soft eyes, she turned her back on him; but remembering her manners, curtsied at the door; and so retired; and unpretending Virtue lent her such true dignity that he was struck dumb, and made no attempt to detain her.

I think her dignified composure did not last long when she was alone; at least, the next time he saw her, her eyes were red; his heart smote him, and he began to make excuses and beg her forgiveness. But she interrupted him. "Don't speak to me no more, if you please, sir," said she, civilly, but coldly.

Mercy, though so quiet and inoffensive, had depth and strength of character. She never told her mother what Thomas Leicester had proposed to her. Her honest pride kept her silent, for one thing. She would not have it known she had been insulted. And, besides that, she loved Thomas Leicester still, and could not expose or hurt him. Once there was an Israelite without guile; though you and I never saw him; and once there was a Saxon without bile; and her name was Mercy Vint. In this heart of gold the affections were stronger than the passions. She was deeply wounded, and showed it in a patient way to him who had wounded her, but to none other. Her conduct to him in public and private was truly singular, and would alone have stamped her a remarkable character. She declined all communication with him in private, and avoided him steadily and adroitly; but in public she spoke to him, sang with him, when she was asked, and treated him much the same as before. He could see a subtle difference, but nobody else could.

This generosity, coupled with all she had done for him before, penetrated his heart and filled him with admiration and remorse. He yielded to Mrs. Vint's suggestions; and told her she was right; he would tear himself away, and never see the dear "Packhorse" again. "But, oh, dame," said he, "'tis a sorrowful thing to be alone in the world again, and nought to do. If I had but a farm, and a sweet little inn like this, perchance my heart would not be quite so heavy as 'tis this day at thoughts of parting from thee and thine."

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Vint, "if that is all, there is the 'Vine' to let at this moment. 'Tis a better place of business than this; and some meadows go with it, and land to be had in the parish."

"I'll ride and see it," said Griffith, eagerly: then, dejectedly, "but, alas, I have no heart to keep an inn without somebody to help me, and say a kind word now and then. Ah, Mercy Vint, thou hast spoiled me for living alone."

This vacillation exhausted Mrs. Vint's patience. "What are ye sighing about, ye foolish man?" said she, contemptuously; "you have got it all your own way: if 'tis a wife ye want, ask Mercy, and don't take a nay: if ye would have a housekeeper, you need not want one long. I'll be bound there's plenty of young women where you came from as would be glad to keep the 'Vine' under you. And, if you come to that, our Mercy is a treasure on the farm, but she is no help in the inn, no more than a wax figure: she never brought us a shilling, till you came and made her sing to your base viol. Nay, what you want is a smart handsome girl, with a quick eye and a ready tongue, and one as can look a man in the face, and not given to love nor liquor. Don't you know never such a one?"

"Not I. Humph, to be sure there is Caroline Ryder. She is handsome, and hath a good wit. She is a lady's maid."

"That's your woman, if she'll come. And to be sure she will; for to be mistress of an inn, that's a lady's maid's Paradise."

"She would have come a few months ago, and gladly: I'll write to her."

"Better talk to her, and persuade her."

"I'll do that too; but I must write to her first."

"So do then; but whatever you do, don't shilly-shally no longer. If wrestling was shilly-shallying, methinks you'd bear the bell, you or else Paul Carrick. Why, all his trouble comes on't. He might have wed our Mercy a year ago for the asking. Shilly-shally belongs to us that be women. 'Tis despicable in a man."

Thus driven on all sides, Griffith rode and inspected the "Vine" (it was only seven miles off); and, after the usual chaffering, came to terms with the proprietor.

He fixed the day for his departure, and told Mrs. Vint he must ride into Cumberland first to get some money, and also to see about a housekeeper.

He made no secret of all this; and, indeed, was not without hopes Mercy would relent, or perhaps be jealous of this housekeeper. But the only visible effect was to make her look pale and sad: she avoided him in private as before.

Harry Vint was loud in his regrets, and Carrick openly exultant. Griffith wrote to Caroline Ryder, and addressed the letter in a feigned hand, and took it himself to the nearest post town.

The letter came to hand, and will appear in that sequence of events on which I am now about to enter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IF Griffith Gaunt suffered anguish, he inflicted agony. Mrs. Gaunt was a high-spirited, proud, and sensitive woman; and he crushed her with foul words. Leonard was a delicate, vain, and sensitive man, accustomed to veneration. Imagine such a man hurled to the ground, and trampled upon.

Griffith should not have fled; he should have stayed and enjoyed his vengeance on these two persons. It might have cooled him a little had he stopped and seen the immediate consequences of his savage act.

The priest rose from the ground, pale as ashes, and trembling with fear and hate.

The lady was leaning, white as a sheet, against a tree, and holding it with her very nails for a little support.

They looked round at one another; a piteous glance of anguish and horror: then Mrs. Gaunt turned and flung her arm round so that the palm of her hand, high raised, confronted Leonard. I am thus particular, because it was a gesture grand and terrible as the occasion that called it forth: a gesture that *spoke*, and said, "Put the whole earth and sea between us for ever after this."

The next moment she bent her head and rushed away, cowering and wringing her hands: she made for her house as naturally as a scared animal for its lair; but, ere she could reach it, she tottered under the shame, the distress, and the mere terror, and fell fainting with her fair forehead on the grass.

Caroline Ryder was crouched in the doorway, and did not see her come out of the grove, but only heard a rustle, and then saw her proud mistress totter forward and lie white, senseless, helpless, at her very feet.

Ryder uttered a scream; but did not lose her presence of mind. She instantly kneeled over Mrs. Gaunt, and loosened her stays with quick and dexterous hand.

It was very like the hawk perched over and clawing the ringdove she has struck down.

But people with brains are never quite inhuman: a drop of lukewarm pity entered even Ryder's heart as she assisted her victim. She called no one to help her; for she saw something very serious had happened, and she felt sure Mrs. Gaunt would say something imprudent in that dangerous period, when the patient recovers consciousness but has not all her wits about her. Now Ryder was equally determined to know her mistress's secrets, and not to share the knowledge with any other person.

It was a long swoon; and, when Mrs. Gaunt came to, the first thing she saw was Ryder leaning over her, with a face of much curiosity, and some concern.

In that moment of weakness the poor lady, who had been so roughly handled, saw a woman close to her, and being a little kind to her; so what did she do but throw her arms round Ryder's neck and burst out sobbing as if her heart would break.

Then that unprincipled woman shed a tear or two with her, half crocodile, half impulse.

Mrs. Gaunt not only cried on her servant's neck; she justified Ryder's forecast by speaking unguardedly: "I've been insulted—insulted—insulted!"

But, even while uttering these words, she was recovering her pride: so the first "insulted" seemed to come from a broken-hearted child, the second from an indignant lady, the third from a wounded queen.

No more words than this; but rose, with Ryder's assistance, and went, leaning on that faithful creature's shoulder, to her own bedroom. There she sank into a chair and said, in a voice to melt a stone, "My child! Bring me my little Rose."

Ryder ran and fetched the little girl; and Mrs. Gaunt held out both arms to her, angelically, and clasped her so passionately and piteously to her bosom, that Rose cried for fear, and never forgot the scene all her days: and Mrs. Ryder, who was secretly a mother, felt a genuine twinge of pity and remorse. Curiosity, however, was the dominant sentiment: she was impatient to get all these convulsions over, and learn what had actually passed between Mr. and Mrs. Gaunt.

She waited till her mistress appeared calmer: and then, in soft caressing tones, asked her what had happened.

"Never ask me that question again," cried Mrs. Gaunt, wildly: then, with inexpressible dignity, "my good girl, you have done all you could for me; now you must leave me alone with my daughter, and my God, who knows the truth."

Ryder curtsied and retired, burning with baffled curiosity.

Towards dusk Thomas Leicester came into the kitchen, and brought her news with a vengeance. He told her and the other maids that the Squire had gone raving mad, and fled the country. "Oh, lasses," said he, "if you had seen the poor soul's face, a riding headlong through the fair all one as if it was a ploughed field; 'twas white as your smocks: and his eyes glowering on t'other world. We shall ne'er see that face alive again."

-And this was her doing.

It surprised and overpowered Ryder; she threw her apron over her head, and went off in hysterics, and betrayed her lawless attachment to every woman in the kitchen, she who was so clever at probing others.

This day of violent emotions was followed by a sullen and sorrowful gloom.

Mrs. Gaunt kept her bedroom, and admitted nobody; till, at last, the servants consulted together, and sent little Rose to knock at her door, with a basin of chocolate, while they watched on the stairs.

"It's only me, mamma," said Rose.

"Come in, my precious," said a trembling voice: and so Rose got in with her chocolate.

The next day she was sent for early: and at noon, Mrs. Gaunt and Rose came downstairs; but their appearance startled the whole household.

The mother was dressed all in black, and so was her daughter, whom she led by the hand. Mrs. Gaunt's face was pale, and sad, and stern; a monument of deep suffering, and high-strung resolution.

It soon transpired that Griffith had left his home for good: and friends called on Mrs. Gaunt to slake their curiosity under the mask of sympathy.

Not one of them was admitted. No false excuses were made. "My mistress sees no one for the present," was the reply.

Curiosity, thus baffled, took up the pen; but was met with a short unvarying formula: "There is an unhappy misunderstanding between my husband and me. But I shall neither accuse him behind his back, nor justify myself."

Thus the proud lady carried herself before the world; but secretly she withered. A wife abandoned is a woman insulted, and the wives—that are not abandoned—cluck.

Ryder was dejected for a time, and, though not honestly penitent, suffered some remorse at the miserable issue of her intrigues. But her elastic nature soon shook it off, and she felt a certain satisfaction at having reduced Mrs. Gaunt to her own level. This disarmed her hostility: she watched her as keenly as ever, but out of pure curiosity.

One thing puzzled her strangely. Leonard did not visit the house; nor could she even detect any communication between the parties.

At last, one day, her mistress told her to put on her hat, and go to Father Leonard.

Ryder's eyes sparkled; and she was soon equipped. Mrs. Gaunt put a parcel and a letter into her hands. Ryder no sooner got out of her sight than she proceeded to tamper with the letter. But to her just indignation she found it so ingeniously folded and sealed that she could not read a word.

The parcel, however, she easily undid, and it contained forty pounds in gold and small notes. "Oho! my lady," said Ryder.

She was received by Leonard with a tender emotion he in vain tried to conceal.

On reading the letter his features contracted sharply, and he seemed to suffer agony. He would not even open the parcel. "You will take that back," said he, bitterly.

"What, without a word?"

"Without a word. But I will write, when I am able."

"Don't be long, sir," suggested Ryder. "I am sure my mistress is wearying for you. Consider, sir, she is all alone now."

"Not so much alone as I am," said the priest: "nor half so unfortunate."

And with this he leaned his head despairingly on his hand, and motioned to Ryder to leave him.

"Here's a couple of fools," said she to herself, as she went home.

That very evening Thomas Leicester caught her alone, and asked her to marry him.

She stared at first, and then treated it as a jest. "You come at the wrong time, young man," said she. "Marriage is put out of countenance. No, no, I will never marry, after what I have seen in this house."

Leicester would not take this for an answer, and pressed her hard.

"Thomas," said this plausible jade, "I like you very well; but I couldn't leave my mistress in her trouble. Time to talk of marrying when master comes here alive and well."

"Nay," said Leicester, "my only chance is while he is away: you care more for his little finger than for my whole body; that they all say."

"Who says?"

"Jane, and all the lasses."

"You simple man, they want you for themselves; that is why they belie me."

"Nay, nay; I saw how you carried on, when I brought word he was gone. You let your heart out for once. Don't take me for a fool: I see how 'tis: but I'll face it: for I worship the ground you walk on. Take a thought, my lass. What good can come of your setting your heart on *him*? I'm young, I'm healthy, and not ugly enough to set the dogs a barking: I've got a good place; I love you dear; I'll cure you of that fancy, and make you as happy as the day is long. I'll try and make you as happy as you will make me, my beauty."

He was so earnest, and so much in love, that Mrs. Ryder pitied him, and wished her husband was in Heaven.

"I am very sorry, Tom," said she, softly: "dear me, I did not think you cared so much for me as this. I must just tell you the truth. I have got one in my own country, and I've promised him. I don't care to break my word: and, if I did, he is such a man, I am sure he would kill me for it. Indeed he has told me as much, more than once or twice."

"Killing is a game that two can play at."

"Ah! but 'tis an ugly game: and I'll have no hand in it. And—don't you be angry with me, Tom—I've known him longest, and—I love him best."

By pertinacity and variety in lying, she hit the mark at last. Tom swallowed this figment whole.

"That is but reason," said he. "I take my answer, and I wish ye both many happy days together, and well spent."

With this he retired, and blubbered a good hour in an outhouse.

Tom avoided the castle, and fell into low spirits. He told his mother all, and she advised him to change the air. "You have been too long in one place," said she; "I hate being too long in one place myself."

This fired Tom's gipsy blood, and he said he would travel to-morrow, if he could but scrape together money enough to fill a pedlar's pack.

He applied for a loan in several quarters, but was denied in all.

At last the poor fellow summoned courage to lay his case before Mrs. Gaunt. Ryder's influence procured him an interview. She took him into the drawing-room, and bade him wait there. By and by a pale lady, all in black, glided into the room.

He pulled his front hair, and began to stammer something or other.

She interrupted him. "Ryder has told me," said she, softly. "I am sorry for you : and I will do what you require. And, to be sure, we need no gamekeeper here now."

She then gave him some money, and said she would look him up a few trifles besides, to put in his pack.

Tom's mother helped him to lay out this money to advantage, and, one day, he called at Hernshaw, pack and all, to bid farewell.

The servants all laid out something with him for luck : and Mrs. Gaunt sent for him, and gave him a gold thimble, and a pound of tea, and several yards of gold lace, slightly tarnished, and a Queen Anne's guinea.

He thanked her heartily. "Ay, Dame," said he, "you had always an open hand, married or single. My heart is heavy at leaving you. But I miss the Squire's kindly face too. Hernshaw is not what it used to be."

Mrs. Gaunt turned her head aside, and the man could see his words had made her cry.

"My good Thomas," said she, at last, "you are going to travel the country : you might fall in with him."

"I might," said Leicester, incredulously.

"God grant you may : and, if ever you should, think of your poor mistress, and give him—this." She put her finger in her bosom and drew out a bullet wrapped in silver paper. "You will never lose this," said she. "I value it more than gold or silver. Oh, if ever you *should* see him, think of me and my daughter, and just put it in his hand without a word."

As he went out of the room Ryder intercepted him, and said, "Mayhap you will fall in with our master : if ever you do, tell him he is under a mistake, and the sooner he comes home the better."

Tom Leicester departed : and, for days and weeks, nothing occurred to break the sorrowful monotony of the place.

But the mourner had written to her old friend and confessor Francis : and, after some delay, involuntary on his part, he came to see her.

They were often closeted together, and spoke so low that Ryder could not catch a word.

Francis also paid several visits to Leonard ; and the final result of these visits was that the latter left England.

Francis remained at Hernshaw as long as he could ; and it was Mrs. Gaunt's hourly prayer that Griffith might return while Francis was with her.

He did, at her earnest request, stay much longer than he had intended ; but, at length, he was obliged to fix next Monday to return to his own place.

It was on Thursday he made this arrangement ; but the very next day the postman brought a letter to the Castle, thus addressed :—

"To Mistress Caroline Ryder,

"Living Servant with Griffith Gaunt, Esq.,

"at his house, called Hernshaw Castle,

"near Wigeonmoor,

"in the county of Cumberland.

"These with speed."

The address was in a feigned hand. Ryder opened it in the kitchen, and uttered a scream.

Instantly three female throats opened upon her with questions.

She looked them contemptuously in their faces, put the letter into her pocket; and, soon after, slipped away to her own room, and locked herself in while she read it. It ran thus:—

“GOOD MISTRESS RYDER,—I am alive yet, by the blessing; though somewhat battered; being now risen from a fever, wherein I lost my wits for a time. And, on coming to myself, I found them making of my shroud; whereby you shall learn how near I was to death. And all this I owe to that false perjured woman that was my wife, and is your mistress.

“Know that I have donned russet, and doffed gentility; for I find a heavy heart’s best cure is occupation. I have taken a wayside inn, and think of renting a small farm, which two things go well together. Now you are, of all those I know, most fitted to manage the inn, and I the farm. You were always my good friend: and, if you be so still, then I charge you most solemnly that you utter no word to any living soul about this letter; but meet me privately where we can talk fully of these matters; for I will not set foot in Hernshaw Castle. Moreover, she told me once ’twas hers; and so be it. On Friday I shall lie at Stapleton, and the next day, by an easy journey, to the place where I once was so happy.

“So then at seven of the clock on Saturday evening, be the same wet or dry, prithee come to the gate of the grove unbeknown, and speak to

“Your faithful friend

“and most unhappy master,

“GRIFFITH GAUNT.

“Be secret as the grave. Would I were in it.”

This letter set Caroline Ryder in a tumult. Griffith alive and well, and set against his wife, and coming to her for assistance!

After the first agitation, she read it again, and weighed every syllable. There was one book she had studied more than most of us—the Heart. And she soon read Griffith’s in this letter. It was no love-letter: he really intended business: but, weak in health, and broken in spirit, and alone in the world, he naturally turned to one who had confessed an affection for him, and would therefore be true to his interests, and study his happiness.

The proposal was every way satisfactory to Mrs. Ryder. To be mistress of an inn, and have servants under her instead of being one herself. And then, if Griffith and she began as allies in business, she felt very sure she could make herself, first necessary to him, and then dear to him.

She was so elated she could hardly contain herself; and all her fellow-servants remarked that Mrs. Ryder had heard good news.

Saturday came, and never did hours seem to creep so slowly.

But at last the sun set, and the stars came out: there was no moon. Ryder opened the window and looked out: it was an admirable night for an assignation.

She washed her face again, put on her grey silk gown, and purple petticoat—*Mrs. Gaunt* had given them to her—and, at the last moment, went and made up her mistress's fire, and put out everything she thought could be wanted, and, five minutes after seven o'clock, tied a scarlet handkerchief over her head, and stepped out at the back door.

What with her coal-black hair, so streaked with red, her black eyes, flashing in the starlight, and her glowing cheeks, she looked bewitching.

And, thus armed for conquest, wily, yet impassioned, she stole out, with noiseless foot and beating heart, to her appointment with her imprudent master.

TO PLUTUS.

PLUTUS, God of Riches, at thy shrine
 Floated never incense-wreath of mine,
 Word of supplication, song of praise;
 I despised thee in my early days,
 Thee and all thy worshippers. Behold,
 Youthful joy and courage waxing cold,
 I am punish'd by thy powerful hand,
 Proving well its manifold command.

All earth-hidden treasures are thy dower,
 On the earth great mastery and power;
 Park and palace thy goodwill assigns,
 Dainty victuals and flow'r-fragrant wines,
 Horses, chariots, pleasure-ships that go
 Where the world is sweetest, to and fro,
 Various joy of music, pictures, books,
 Soft perpetual service, smiling looks;
 Almost all the Gods I find thy friends;
 Wise is he who at thine altar bends!
 Cupid, Hymen, are thy sworn allies,
 Scarcely doth Apollo thee despise.
 Nay, 'twould seem as if the Powers at large
 Gave this earth completely to thy charge.

I am now too old to change my ways;
 Still do I refuse thee pray'r or praise;
 Change I will not, I'm too old a week,
 Nor thine all-desirèd favour seek.
 To thy vengeance, Earth-God!—power thou hast,
 Not my adoration, first or last.

W. A.

IN THE CAPITAL OF KHORASSAN.

THE feelings which filled my breast as I drew near to Meshed, the capital of Khorassan, resembled those experienced by a shipwrecked sailor who has clung for many long days to a bare plank, and been driven hither and thither by the raging sea, and at last finds himself safe upon the deck of some vessel, which Providence has guided to his rescue. Meshed was the place where at the same time I laid aside the mask of a troublesome disguise, my costume of rags, the appearance and reality of poverty, and all the privations which I had endured through ten months of perilous adventure. Here I was to meet an enlightened prince, governor of the province and uncle of the King of Persia, who is, as far as appearances go, a European. Nay more, I had hopes of here embracing an old friend, the only European who sojourns in the far East. No wonder, then, that the blaze of the cupola under which rests the mortal remains of Imam Risa,* reflecting its rays far into the surrounding country, awoke in my bosom feelings unspeakably joyous. No wonder, that I shared the raptures of the devotees who flock by thousands to the tomb of their saint, or of the pilgrims who, after a long and toilsome journey from Turkestan, Afghanistan, and India, at length see before them the goal of their aspirations.

On first beholding the renowned Meshed, the pious Shiites are accustomed to relieve their full hearts by heaping up small piles of stones, by hanging from the branches of the surrounding trees all sorts of variegated rags, and by singing hymns and songs. Imam Risa, who has lured them so far from their distant homes, is the eighth of the twelve Imams. He bears the honorary title Sultan al Gureba (Prince of Strangers), and is the patron of travellers. Inasmuch as he himself died in exile, I could understand the enthusiasm which his adherents feel when, safely escaped from the fierce hordes of the Turkomans, and the other perils of their way, they at last find themselves in the vicinity of his city.

It was one of those fine autumnal mornings which are so common in the eastern part of Iran. The country round, a bare plain broken by but few hills, has little that is romantic in its appearance. All the more striking is that of the oasis-like city, surrounded with gardens, and bright with glittering parti-coloured cupolas. Of what went on around me in the caravan I was wholly unconscious; for my gaze was fixed upon the mass of buildings before me. Not the coffin of the Imam, not the remains of the great Haroun al Rashid, not the monument of the learned astrologer, Nureddin Tusi, nor those

* Imam Risa, the son of Imam Musa, had, as an Alevite of high rank, through the devotion shown towards him by the members of the then secret sect of the Shiites, aroused the envy and jealousy of the Kaliph Meeman, son of the famous Haroun al Rashid, who banished him to Tus, a town in the neighbourhood of the present Meshed. As he here also became the object of universal veneration, the Kaliph is said to have had him poisoned in a draught of grape-juice. His death was regarded as that of a martyr, and the town itself received in consequence the name of Meshed, *i.e.*, place of martyrdom.

of Gazali or of Nizam ul Mulk and others attracted me. It was my own fortune which thrust into the background all historical reminiscences. All other thoughts were for the moment forgotten in the pleasant consciousness that my toils were at last at an end, and that a new life would begin with my entrance within those walls.

I was aroused from these day-dreams as the caravan, passing through the Dervaze Herat (Herat Gate), reached the long broad street of Pajin Khiaban (Lower Alley), and pressed towards the Sahni Sherif (Holy Vestibule). The broad canal, whose banks are shaded with trees, offers a pleasant prospect, and in no small measure contributes to make Meshed one of the finest cities of Persia. Especially striking is the ever-restless crowd in its streets. Here are to be seen all the costumes of Persia, nay of the whole of Eastern Asia; for this is the great meeting-place of the Shiite world. The Indian, the Hezare, the Herater, the Bukhariot, who in their own countries move ever with bent necks, bowing beneath the rule of Sunnites, here carry their heads proudly and erect, and thus form a strange contrast to the Turkoman or the Uzbeg, who slinks fearfully along the wall. He is Sunnite, and therefore a strange, nay more, a hated guest. In Iran it is true he can hardly suffer ill-treatment; nevertheless he feels here the sin of the cruelty which at home he is accustomed to practise on the partizans of Ali—and bears himself humbly.

The streets of Meshed are seldom empty; but they are especially full, nay, crammed full, during the bright days of autumn; and he who at such a time, between the hours of ten and twelve, glances at the varied throngs swarming in every street, will be so confused with the hundreds of objects around him that he will with difficulty carry away a distinct idea of any one of them. For about two hundred paces from the gorgeous edifice of the Imam, on either side of the street beside their booths, as well as along the banks of the canal, are a multitude of hucksters and petty traders, who, carrying their wares in their hands, on their shoulders, or on their heads, expose them for sale, and with their singing cries and their gesticulations, make a strange tumult and hubbub. Buyers and sellers are commingled in the wildest confusion, and it is often impossible to force one's way through the human mass. Nevertheless a block in the streets rarely occurs. Foot passengers, men on horseback, laden camels, strings of mules, one fastened behind the other, bearing bales of merchandise, or kedjeves (travelling panniers), out of which delicate, half-veiled ladies peer coquettishly, pass continually, some in, some out of the gates of this holy place of pilgrimage. He who is taking his departure is saluted from all sides with a "*Ziaretî khabul*" (May thy pilgrimage be accepted!), he who is entering by an "*Iltimâsi dua*" (Pray for me). In this chaos of sounds, in this deafening confusion, the beggars, however, contrive by dint of loud cries to obtain their tribute from the devout pilgrims. The numberless Seyds (descendants of the Prophet), conspicuous by their green turbans, contrive with their keen, prying eyes to ferret out the newly arrived. They crowd around him to offer their service as ciceroni in the several holy places. The throng sings, shouts, howls; the hot-blooded muleteer from Shiraz curses and hits wildly right and left; women and children scream with terror. To our European eyes the confusion seems to wax more and more terrible; we think the greatest

dangers are at hand, and yet—everything contrives somehow to get into order; every one goes forward to his destination, without suffering any loss, without having any cause to complain.

Accustomed to the dull, constrained character of the cities of Turkestan, I was charmed with the picture before me. I went into a kervan serail, washed myself, and arranged my costume of rags, in order first of all to look for the European friend alluded to above, Colonel Dolmage. To inquire after a Feringee in the holy city Meshed is ever an unpleasant thing, especially for a Hadji (pilgrim), as to all outward appearance I was. After running about here and there for some time, I at length succeeded in reaching the gate of the house in which he resided. Who can describe my emotions, as I knocked at the door? A servant appeared, but no sooner did he see me than he slammed it in my face with curses and abuse. I knocked a second time. The same man appeared. This time I did not wait for him to speak, but forced myself past him into the court. "Who art thou? What dost thou want, Hadji?" thundered the porter. "What hast thou to do with my master? Knowest thou not that he is an unbeliever?" "Believer or unbeliever," exclaimed I, in a tone of anger; "make haste, and call him hither, and tell him that a guest has come from Bokhara."

The servant departed, and I meanwhile walked into a room. How great was my joy at seeing the first objects of European life, a table and a chair! I stood before them as before holy relics, stared long with moistening eyes and almost missed observing a newspaper which lay on the table. It was a number of the *Levant Herald* of Constantinople. What a quantity of news did my curious eyes discover in its columns! I was absorbed in its perusal when I suddenly saw before me the stalwart young Briton, in a European uniform. He stared fixedly at me, but failed to recognize me. For about the space of four minutes we stood confronting one another silent and motionless. As I at last saw that he could by no means recall me to his memory, which, considering the terrible change in my appearance was not to be wondered at, I broke the silence by exclaiming, in English, "What, you don't recognize me?" My voice broke the spell and recalled me to his remembrance, and also at the same time my adventure, of which he had had some vague surmises. Without answering, he threw himself upon me, embraced me, and wept like a child, as he beheld my ragged, wretched condition.

This first embrace immediately covered him with a quantity of those little animals which swarmed about me. Of this he took little or no notice; but from his questions, "In God's name, what have you been doing? What has become of you?" I could perceive what terrible traces my dangerous adventure had left on my external appearance. The narrative of all I had gone through engaged us in conversation till late in the evening. It will be readily imagined with what feelings of pity the picture of so much suffering was regarded by the sympathetic European listener. In the West we should have been separated by considerations of rank and nationality; here, in the far East, we as Europeans felt for one another as if we had been blood relations. Colonel Dolmage showed this conspicuously. During my four weeks' sojourn I occasioned him not a few unpleasantnesses, nevertheless he was always friendly

and good-humoured, overwhelmed me with kind offices, and was indeed the only means of enabling me to continue my journey homeward with renewed strength and spirits.

After the first few days devoted to rest and refreshment, Meshed, in many respects one of the most interesting cities of Eastern Asia, began to excite my attention in various ways. Indeed, I was so overwhelmed with the variety of curiosities to be seen there, that I hardly knew what to observe first, whether I should begin with its historical, or its religious, or its literary monuments. When I first entered the Sahni Sherif, I attracted, by my gaping admiration, the attention of several hungry Seids, who naturally took me for a Sunnite pilgrim, and eagerly exerted themselves to point out to my notice all the wonders of the holy tomb. "Strange," thought I: "Conolly, Frazer, Burnes, Chanikoff, nay, even the official Eastwick himself, eagerly sought to cast one glance from far into this sanctuary, and here am I almost compelled to enter it." Nevertheless, I must confess that after my ten months of pseudo-pilgrimage, these holy things of Islamism had become somewhat tiresome to me. I therefore rejected all the services so importunately pressed upon me, and preferred visiting the monument which lies to the left of the Sahn, and also the splendid mosque of Gowher Shah.

The first of these buildings, encrusted as it is within and without with gold, is unquestionably the richest tomb in the whole Islamite world, surpassing in wealth and magnificence even Medina, Nedjef (where Ali rests), Kerbela (where Imam Hussein rests), and Kum (where rests Fatima, the sister of Imam Risa). Although since the date of its first erection it has been several times plundered, the cupolas, towers, and the massive fretted work of the interior still contain an incalculable amount of treasure. In these devastations Meshed suffered most from the Uzbeks, who in 1587, under their leader, Abdul Muria, Khan of Bokhara, sacked the city, and led away captive a large part of the inhabitants. It also suffered from the Afghans, and from the civil wars which raged within its walls. The sons of Nadir are said to have carried away the golden ball from the top of the dome which surmounts the tomb, which was four hundred and twenty pounds in weight. In later times, the rebel leader, Salar, purloined several jewels from the building. Still the walls of the monument are adorned with the rarest trinkets and jewels, which have been brought together by the devout zeal of the Shiites, out of love for their saint. Here is an *aigrette* (djikka) of diamonds, there a sword and shield studded with rubies and emeralds, rich old bracelets, large massive candelabra, necklaces of immense value. These and other such like jewels produce upon the mind of the visitor such a dazzling effect, that he knows not what to admire first, the elegant construction of the dome, the many-coloured windows, the rich arabesques, the gorgeous carpets embroidered with diamonds, the thick, massive grating of silver, or the swarm of devout worshippers. Nevertheless, the last is the most interesting. With what contrition, with what fervour and self-abasement, with what rapture and joy is the Shiite here filled! Tablets on which are inscribed the customary prayers, hang from the pillars of the grating. Before each of them a little group of the devout is posted, either to pray themselves, or to repeat the

petitions after the leader of their common devotions. This they do with cries and sobs, as though thus to open to them the gates of the abodes of eternal bliss. The wild Bakhtiari and Kurd, the wily Ispahaner and Shirazer, the simple Turk from Aderbijan, the anxious careful inhabitant of Central Asia, the sons of Khans and Mirzas, poor peasants and servants—all are here mingled together. It is indeed a singular and sublime spectacle to see how these rude sons of Asia kiss with unfeigned tenderness the fretwork of the grating, the pavement, and especially the great padlock which hangs from the door of the grating. Only the priests and the Seids are uninfluenced by these feelings of devotion. Their only concern is with the pence which they may collect. They force their way everywhere among the devout, nor do they retire till by felicitations or other good offices they have obtained the desired mite. When the pilgrim, filled with awe, walking backward, has at last left the building, he has earned for himself the honorary title of Meshedi, a title which he has inscribed on his signet and his tombstone, and which he ever after prefixes to his name as an *adnomen*. It confers upon him no less glory and sanctity than the title of Hadji (pilgrim to Mecca). The pilgrim has no sooner returned into the air than he draws a long breath: his eyes sparkle with joy; for not only is he now released from the burden of his former sins, but for the rest of his earthly pilgrimage he feels secure and at ease.

The mosque Gowher Shah, which stands in the same court, opposite to the monument of Imam Risa, is conspicuous rather for its artistic beauties than for its wealth. The lofty portal, with its variegated Kashi-work (of glazed tiles), when lit up by the sun's rays, affords, from its beautiful colouring, a most brilliant spectacle. It was long before I could determine whether I should award the palm to this gate or to those two in Samarcand and Herat, which are of the same style; for it is certain that they all date from the reign of Shahrah Mirza, if indeed they were not the work of the same architect. It is possible that the Madrass Khanum in Samarcand, as also the Musalla in Herat, were more luxurious and magnificent, but I can hardly believe that they were ever more beautiful. In the interior of the building, as well as on the exterior, Kashi-work predominates. Gold and silver are certainly to be found there, but still the Persian is right when he says that Imam Risa's monument is the more princely structure, but this the richest in point of art.

On leaving this splendid building, I was borne away by the stream of beggars and pilgrims to the refectory of Imam Risa, or, as the natives call it, Ashbaz Khanei Hazret (the kitchen of his Highness). The Hazret, so his Holiness is entitled *par excellence*, has the reputation of being extremely rich. He has baths, caravanserais, bazaars, boarding-houses, and soap-boiling houses, in one word, everything required for the convenience of the guests who flock to him. Any new arrival may become his guest, but only for the space of seven days. The richer pilgrims of course decline with thanks, but the poorer seldom refuse to satisfy their appetites with his Highness's pilau during the appointed six days of their sojourn. Although the kitchen of my friend Dolmage left nothing to be wished for, I could not resist my curiosity, and I

determined for the last time to take advantage of my Bukhariot dress. This prevented any one from seeing anything remarkable in my squatting down among the crowd of Shiite and Sunnite pilgrims. After we had waited some time in the great hall, a troop of servants appeared bearing large dishes of smoking rice. Wonders are related of the savouriness and of the blessedness of his Highness's fare. Nevertheless, the rancid fat and damaged rice convinced me of the contrary. It is true that I splashed about with my fist in the dish, like the rest of the company, but I took good care not to eat anything, and felt extremely relieved when the table was removed and I was able to retire.

On the whole, it seems to me that it is the fabulous riches ascribed to Imam Risa, more than renowned sancity, more than the inviolable right of asylum that belong to him, which excites so powerfully the admiration of the greedy, avaricious Persian. None but true believers are allowed to enter the holy places. Hindoos, Armenians, and Jews, are not allowed to approach even within sight of them. From a distance of five hundred paces their eyes can dart desecration and profanation.

Now that I am speaking of the Jews, I may mention the surprise one of them, whom I had known as a fellow-traveller on my way from Bokhara, caused me in Meshed. As I saw him one day in the street, I called to him, "Yehudi, Yehudi." He instantly approached me, and in a low voice said, "For God's sake, Hadji, do not call me a Jew here. Beyond these walls I belong to my nation, but here I must play the Moslem." This fear and disguise on the part of the Jews has its origin in the following characteristic circumstances. A Jewess, who a few years ago suffered from an eruption on the hand, went to consult a Persian doctor about it. He advised her to plunge her hand into the entrails of a newly-slaughtered dog. As this seemed the only means of cure, in spite of her repugnance she had one of these unfortunate street scavengers killed for the purpose of following the prescription. Unfortunately this medical experiment fell on the very day on which the Mohammedans were celebrating the Eidi Kurban (Feast of Sacrifice). The story of the slaughtered dog speedily became public, and, as the Jews are universally detested, malice and envy had no difficulty in misrepresenting the affair as a profane parody of the customs of the faithful. The mob, which only waited for a favourable opportunity of gratifying their malignity and rapacity, rushed raging into the Jewish quarter of the town, and robbed and murdered to their hearts' content. Those children of Israel who contrived to escape with bare life, were allowed to exist only on condition of embracing Islamism. As may be imagined, this compulsory conversion is of force only within the bounds of Meshed. Elsewhere the Jew remains true to the faith of his fathers. Although in course of time, and under European influence, the intolerance of the faithful has somewhat diminished, the Jew still wishes even now to pass for a Mohammedan as long as he walks the streets of this holy city.

It struck me as peculiarly amusing that all my fellow-pilgrims considered me as a genuine Bukhariot, on account of my costume and my speech. Constant practice had indeed made the dialect of Central Asia perfectly easy

and natural to me. It was in vain I assured them that I was a son of Stambul. The people answered me shrewdly—"Yes, yes, we know the Bukhariots well; here you would all disguise yourselves, inasmuch as you fear retribution for your cruelty at home. But your trouble is in vain, we see through it all." Thus, Bukhariot in Meshed, Mesheder at Bokhara, on the way Russian, European, or other mysterious personage—what will they make out of me at last! But such surmises and suspicions were luckily no longer any serious danger to me here, where the shadow, at any rate, of a government exists. In Upper Asia all is disguised, everybody is in incognito, but especially the traveller. How my heart beat at the thought that I should escape from this world of deceit toward the West; toward that West which, with all its vices, all its abuses, is infinitely above the East; toward that West, where lies my native land and the goal of all my efforts!

Favourably received by the governor of the place, and loaded with presents and marks of distinction, I was able to prepare at my leisure for my winter journey to Teheran. And although the latter city is thirty days' journey from Meshed, and though winter makes so long a ride by no means pleasant, the moment when I rode out of the city gates was one of exceeding joy for me.

Before I finally quitted the holy city, I made an excursion to the tomb of the greatest of Iran's bards, to the tomb of Firdusi. Its site was pointed out to me among the ruins of Tus, to the north of the town. The monument is a very modest one; none the less does it commemorate one of the greatest national poets of the world, who sang the history of his people in sixty thousand verses without admitting more than two foreign (to wit, Arabic) words into his narration. To appreciate this fact, it must be remembered that the Persian of that time, like that of the present day, contained four words of Arabic origin to every six of native Iranian. But Firdusi would be a true son of Iran, and held it a sin to employ the language of the enslavers of his people. As regards his personal character, Firdusi was also admirable to an extent which is rare in Asia. Sultan Mahmud, the Ghaznevite, sent him, instead of the large sum he had promised, only thirty thousand drachms. The poet felt himself insulted, and, as he happened to be in the bath when the present arrived, he distributed it immediately among the servants of the establishment. Subsequently the Sultan repented of his meanness; but when the caravan of loaded camels approached the poet's residence, they encountered his funeral *cortège*. His daughter also scorned the gifts of the ungrateful monarch, and the treasure was sent back. The bard died in honour, but he had branded the prince's name with eternal disgrace, for it will be long ere the satire

"Oh! Sultan Mahmud, if thou fearest none, yet fear God!"
will be forgotten by his people. How great is the difference between the modern Persians and their great poet!

ARMINIUS VÁMBÉRY.

BRIDE-CATCHING.

I INVITE you to inspect my show of marriage knick-knacks. It embraces oddities from all the ends of the earth. A pictorial exhibition mainly, with a minimum of patterning. One word at the outset, and then—the show in silence. Let me turn up the lights.

When men were very rude it was a law among them—never mind its origin—that a man should not marry a woman of his own group or tribe. Wives had to be procured from foreign groups. And as the relations of the groups were uniformly hostile, wives could only be procured by fighting for them, or by suddenly catching them or running them down when found alone and unprotected. There are still races of men so rude that they systematically get wives by these methods; there are others with whom the system of capturing women for wives appears in states of progress towards a symbolism; others, again, with whom that system is perfectly symbolized. After the necessity for such a system has been superseded, the people, out of respect to ancient usage, long continue to mimic in their marriages the ancient methods of getting wives.

A marriage ceremony in which any one of these methods is mimicked I call the Form of Capture. This form occurs, then, whenever, after a contract of marriage, it is considered essential to the constitution of the marriage that the bridegroom and his friends should carry off the bride as the prize of victory in a simulated conflict with her relations; should feign to catch or steal her, or to make her a captive after pursuit. Its commonest shape is the simulated conflict; but “bride-catching,” and “bride racing,” are not unfrequent. The form is also found in various states of disintegration.

Till I made it the subject of a speculation no collection had been made of examples of this form. I have recently discovered several, and no doubt many are yet to be discovered. The authors in whose books they appear are usually ignorant of such a form being observed anywhere except in their own districts, and they have no explanations to offer of the meaning or origin of what they consider a purely local custom. The disadvantage of this is, that the examples have to be picked up one by one; the advantage is, that we may trust the writers, since their narratives are untainted by theory or hypothesis.

My show consists of a collection of the best (known) examples of the form. I shall exhibit, first, cases in which the leading idea symbolised is the capture of the bride after a conflict with her kinsmen, putting to the front some cases in which there is the idea of a siege of the bride's house; I shall next exhibit cases in which the simple “catching” of the bride, or her capture after a race, is feigned; and I shall lastly exhibit some instances of the form in states of disintegration. So, now you know what to expect, I shall without farther preface open the entertainment.

The people of Berry, in France, observe in their marriages several complex ceremonials. Among them is the form of capture, of which we have a lucid description from the skilled pen of George Sand.

The marriage day having arrived, the bride and her friends shut themselves

up in the home of the bride, barricade the doors, bar the windows, and otherwise prepare as if for a siege. In due course the bridegroom and his friends arrive, and seek admittance. They try, at first, to obtain it by a variety of ruses made in course of a long conversation between the spokesmen of the parties. For example, they are weary pilgrims wanting rest; robbers fleeing from the police and seeking an asylum. Admittance being refused, they assail and batter at the doors; try, as it were, to take the place by storm. Those within the house become active in its defence. Pistols are fired on both sides, and the barking of dogs, the shouts of the men and outcries of the women, swell the uproar. When they are wearied there is a parley and another conversation, which, like the preceding, is after a prescribed traditional pattern. They are at last admitted on stating that they have brought a husband and presents for the bride. Then commences a fresh struggle, for the possession of the hearth. The incidents of attack and defence are again simulated, and with such an appearance of reality that broken ribs and heads are the not unfrequent result. The issue, of course, is that the assailants are victorious, the struggle being perconcerted. The bridegroom obtains his bride, and the more peaceful ceremonies of the marriage are proceeded with.

Are the Berricors French? I could believe them to be a Mongolian tribe, or its débris, the ceremony I have described so closely resembles the form of capture as observed among the Mussulmans of India. Among these, in their weddings, when the bridegroom, attended by his friends in procession, arrives at the house of the bride, he finds the gate shut and guarded. He attempts to get in by a ruse. "Who are you that dare obstruct the king's calvalcade?" The answer is, "Why, at night, so many thieves rove about, it is very possible you are some of them." A long jocular conversation follows, ending in a struggle. "At times, out of frolic, there is such pushing and shoving, that frequently many a one falls down and is hurt." The broken ribs and heads again! They are at last admitted on paying a sum of money. Then follows a sham fight within the gates; after which and other ceremonials the bridegroom carries off his bride.

From France to India; from India to Central Africa. Among the inland negroes we again meet the form of a siege. "When the preliminaries of the marriage are adjusted, the bridegroom, with a number of his companions, set out at night and surround the house of the bride, as if intending to carry her off by force. She and her female attendants, pretending to make all possible resistance, cry aloud for help, but no person appears." The house is quietly stormed and the bride carried off in triumph. Here the bridegroom is the midnight invader of the hamlet, temporarily deserted by its guardians. The braves feign absence; the women unprotectedness. The moment of unprotectedness is the moment of opportunity. There is the siege, but the capture smacks more of theft than robbery.

The symbol of the siege in Transylvania is indistinct. When the bridegroom and his friends arrive at the bride's house they find the door locked. The bridegroom must, as best he can, climb over into the court, open the door from within, and admit his companions. The authority for this disposes of it in three lines, as a matter of little consequence. How much has he

omitted? He has stated enough to enable us to recognise the siege shorn of several of its features. It is undoubtedly the form of capture which occurs in this district, in almost all its shapes.

The form of capture among the Circassians takes its shape from the daring of the wild mountaineers. Since there can be no marriage without the presence of capture, the capture must be feigned in a form to which a Circassian might hold his face before the leaders of his tribe. The marriage day has come; the wedding is being celebrated in the bride's house with noisy feasting and revelry. "Suddenly the bridegroom rushes in and, with the help of a few daring young men," carries off the lady by force. "And by this process she becomes his lawful wife." Details are wanting. But why "the few daring young men?" Doubtless, because the show of opposition is carried a considerable length. There is prearrangement, but that includes resistance; and the games of rude men are apt to be rude. This ceremony, it is said, is observed throughout the Caucasus, and beyond them among the Nogais and Kirghiz.

When these tribesmen become more civilized, in what shape will they retain the form? Perhaps in the shape in which, at Rome, it was observed in the plebeian marriages. In ancient Rome the form of capture was observed in all marriages, but the invasion of the bride's house was feigned only in those of the plebeians. It was essential in these marriages that the bridegroom and his friends should invade the house of the bride, and tear her, with feigned violence, from her mother's lap, or that of her nearest female relative, if her mother were dead or absent. The lady, of course, in the proper lap, waited the bridegroom's coming. To this ceremony Virgil makes allusion in the line—

Quid soceros legere, et gremiis abducere pactas.

It is understood to have been had in view by Apuleius, in the story of the Captive Damsel. The seizure is there vividly described. The bride is dressed in nuptial apparel, and her mother, loading her with kisses, is looking forward to her married life. On a sudden, what seems a band of robbers enters the house. With glittering swords, they make straight for her chamber, in a compact column; and, unopposed by the servants, tear her away from her mother's bosom. The symbol is here suited to the political state. Instead of the rush of wild tribesmen, as in the Caucasus, we have the march of a disciplined soldiery.

In all these cases there is the idea of a siege, or invasion of the bride's house. There is the simulated conflict in the Berricor, Mussulman, and Caucasian examples; in the African, Transylvanian, and Roman examples the form is probably partly disintegrated, but not necessarily, for it might be the practice of a tribe, in their expeditions for wives, to invade their neighbours' hamlets only, or usually, when the braves were absent. In all the examples which come next, the simulation of a conflict is more or less perfect.

I take first the Mongols of the Ortous. The marriage day having arrived, the bridegroom sends early in the morning a deputation to fetch his

"betrothed." "When the envoys draw near," says M. Huc, "the relations and friends of the bride place themselves in a circle before the door, as if to oppose the departure of the bride; and then begins a feigned fight, which of course terminates in the bride being carried off. She is placed on a horse, and having been led thrice round her paternal home, is taken at full gallop to the tent which has been prepared for her near the dwelling of her father-in-law." Thereafter the relations and friends of both families repair to the wedding feast.

The same ceremony is observed in Kalmuck marriages, especially in those of the noble or princely class. After the bargain for the bride, the bridegroom sets out on horseback, accompanied by the chief nobles of his horde, to carry her off. "A sham resistance," says De Hell, "is always made by the people of her camp, in spite of which she fails not to be borne away on a richly-caparisoned horse, with loud shouts and *feux de joie*." There are various hordes of the Kalmucks, and we find the form of capture among them, not only as the simulated conflict, but also as "bride-racing," and in disintegrated forms.

In Muscovy, Lithuania, and Livonia, down till the sixteenth century, might be seen the reality which is symbolised in the two preceding cases. An actual capture, and its incidents, always *preceded* the negotiations for the consent of the bride's parents, which by this time Christianity had made essential to marriage. The reality is to be seen to this day (as an exceptional and *irregular* proceeding, however) among both Kalmucks and Mongols. A young man wants a wife, and knows of an eligible girl living in a certain *youl*. If her relations decline his suit, or he cannot pay the price they demand, his kinsmen mount their horses, sweep down on the place, and capture the girl. They have either to conquer her friends then and there, or they are pursued, and the result is "a cavalry engagement." Were De Hell's account expanded it would probably furnish us with the semblance of such a fight among the Kalmucks. Curiously enough, we find the form of capture in this shape at home among the Welsh. Lord Kames says that the following ceremony was in his day, or at least had till shortly before, been customary among the Welsh. "On the morning of the wedding, the bridegroom, attended by his friends on horseback, demands the bride. Her friends, who are likewise on horseback, give a positive refusal, upon which a mock scuffle ensues. The bride, mounted behind her nearest kinsman, is carried off, and is pursued by the bridegroom and his friends, with loud shouts. It is not uncommon, on such an occasion, to see two or three hundred sturdy Cambro-Britons riding at full speed, crossing and jostling, to the no small amusement of the spectators. When they have fatigued themselves and their horses, the bridegroom is suffered to overtake his bride. He leads her away in triumph, and the scene is concluded with feasting and festivity." This is perfect. It is valuable also as hinting that the simulated fight *might* pass into mere "bride-racing."

Is it credible that the Welsh had an early experience as nomad horsemen? And had the Irish such an experience? In the Irish example of the simulated fight, we again have the parties on horseback, mimicking war in old Scythic fashion. "In their marriages," says Sir Henry Piers, "espe-

cially in those counties where cattle abound, the parents and friends on each side meet on the side of a hill, or, if the weather be cold, in some place of shelter, about midway between both dwellings. If agreement ensue, they drink *the agreement bottle*, which is a good bottle of usquebaugh, and this goes merrily round." Arrangements are then made for the payment of the marriage dowry, and probably for "the bringing home." "On the day of bringing home, the bridegroom and his friends *ride out* and meet the bride and her friends at the place of meeting. Being come near each other, the custom was of old to cast short darts at the company that attended the bride, but at such a distance that seldom any hurt ensued. Yet it is not out of the memory of man that the Lord Hoath on such an occasion lost an eye!" Of older date, no doubt, there was the perfect semblance of a battle. The symbol, as recorded, is partly disintegrated, but it is very singular to find, in the simulation of the bridegroom's attack, down to the seventeenth century, the short darts of old Celtic warfare.

Piers speaks of "the bringing home." A correspondent informs me of an Irish ceremony called "*Hauling home the bride*." "It consists," he says, "of a pretended abduction, after the church ceremony has been performed, and illustrates in a curious manner the perpetuation of the idea of marriage by capture." A gentleman living in the north of Ireland, a member of the Irish Bar and of the Irish Academy, assures me that among the peasantry in Derry, within his recollection, the system of capture existed in a stage of transition towards a symbolism. The bridegroom and his friends surrounded the woman's house at night, seized her, and carried her off to the mountains, where they lodged her in the "safe keeping of some neutral persons. They then opened negotiations with her parents for their consent to the marriage! This is the exact stage of transition which was reached, according to Magnus and Gaya, two or three centuries ago in parts of Prussia, Russia, and Poland. In Ireland it is well known abduction is hardly yet popularly regarded as a crime. To illustrate the state of mind of the people of Derry about marriage, my informant says, that on one occasion, being uncertain of the date of an occurrence, he asked his man-servant if he remembered it. The answer was, "Oh sure, and it was the year we ran off with mistress!"

In some parts of the Highlands of Scotland, and in some districts in Aberdeenshire, it is common for the parties of the bride and bridegroom to go in procession to a point of meeting midway between their dwellings, and on the way to the minister's. I am informed that as the parties approach they fire volleys at one another from pistols and muskets, and that on the way home the marriage procession is fired at nearly all the way. Is this the simulated conflict? I should not doubt it but for the commonness of employing firearms in the Highlands in all demonstrations of joy. It most probably, however, is the form of capture. Mr. Logan, in his book on the Highland clans, gives some facts which go to show that the Highlanders had anciently the system of capture, and till lately observed the form. And he does so apropos of Sir Henry Piers' account, above cited, of the form in Ireland.

I am away again to the East and back to the Tartar stock. The Kookies, of whom there are several tribes on the north-east frontier of India, are fair

representatives of the whole population, from Cape Negrais northwards, through Chittagong and Tipperah, to the Naga settlements above Munniepore. They observe the form. "The Kookies," says Colonel McCulloch, "have no marriage ceremony. When they go to bring away the bride, after having paid for her, they usually receive more kicks than halfpence from the village; that is, they usually get well beaten. But, after the fight is over, the woman is quietly brought from her home and given to the party that came for her, outside the village gate." This is peculiar, as victory appears on the bride's side; but it is undoubtedly the simulated conflict. There is rough usage, but not really fighting, as is proved by the issue.

In the hill tracts of Orissa we find the simulated conflict among the Khonds. It is somewhat disintegrated. The marriage being agreed upon, a feast, to which the families of the parties equally contribute, is prepared at the dwelling of the bride. "To the feast," says Major M'Pherson, "succeed dancing and song. When the night is far spent, the principals in the scene are raised by an uncle of each upon his shoulders, and borne through the dance. The burdens are suddenly exchanged, and the uncle of the youth disappears with the bride. The assembly divides into two parties: the friends of the bride endeavour to arrest, those of the bridegroom to cover, her flight; and men, women, and children mingle in mock conflict, which is often carried to great lengths." "On one occasion," says Major-General Campbell, "I heard loud cries proceeding from a village close at hand. Fearing some quarrel, I rode to the spot, and there I saw a man bearing away upon his back something enveloped in an ample covering of scarlet cloth; he was surrounded by twenty or thirty young fellows, and by them protected from the desperate attacks made upon him by a party of young women. On seeking an explanation of this novel scene, I was told that the man had just been married, and his precious burden was his blooming bride, whom he was conveying to his own village. Her youthful friends, as it appears is the custom, were seeking to regain possession of her, and hurled stones and bamboos at the head of the devoted bridegroom until he reached the confines of his own village. Then the tables were turned, and the bride was fairly won; and off her young friends scampered, screaming and laughing, but not relaxing their speed till they reached their own village." The same ceremony, or some modification of it, may be presumed to prevail among the Koles, the Ghonds, and the other congeners of the Khonds; but we are without authority on the subject.

Major M'Pherson had been in the Caucasus as well as in India, and was aware of the form of capture as a marriage ceremony among the Circassians. He seems to have been much struck by its singularity, and mentions that a similar ceremony is observed among the Hindus. Unfortunately, he gives no details, and, apart from his statement, I have no authority that the simulated conflict is observed by the Hindus. I have authority, however, for the statement that in a disintegrated shape the form of capture was an ancient Hindu marriage rite. This, as a much disintegrated shape, I shall notice hereafter.

If the Hindus and Romans, of high Aryan lineage, had the form, how was

it with the Greeks? They also observed the form of capture. The evidence that they observed it otherwise than as "bride-racing," relates to the Dorians only; but what was true of them was, most probably, true anciently of all the Greek tribes; for the Dorians differed from the others chiefly through having better preserved the ancient customs.

Demaratus, says Herodotus, robbed Leotychides of his bride, his betrothed, by *forestalling* him in carrying her off and marrying her. This was actual abduction; but the language implies that it remained for Leotychides, in order to make the lady his wife, that he should go through the form of carrying her off. In other words, capture was, equally with betrothal, requisite as a preliminary of marriage; nay, as the case of Demaratus shows, it made marriage, though there was no preceding contract,—good law among all the ruder races that observe the form. But the matter is not left to inference. Plutarch expressly states that the Spartan bridegroom always carried off the bride with feigned violence. He says, indeed, "with violence." I suppose there was always a good show of it; but the seizure came after the betrothal and was itself concerted. Latterly it sufficed to seize the bride and carry her from one room to another—a disintegrated shape of the form; but anciently there must have been the simulated conflict.

Such are the leading instances of the simulated conflict. Let us now proceed to the cases of bride-racing and bride-catching. Numerous hints in the Greek legends, which it would be tedious to examine, show that the Greeks had the form in the shape of "bride-racing." The story of Atalanta and Hippomenes is familiar, and there are varieties of the story. She is an Arcadian, at first in Thessaly; then in Tegea. She is the daughter of Schœneus, Iasus, or Mænelos; the successful lover is Hippomenes, or Meitanon. The supposition is there were several Atalantas, at least two or three, an Arcadian, Bœotian, and Argeian. This implies the tradition of "bride-racing" in several divisions of Greece.

Philology shows that "bride-racing" was a German institution, as it shows that "bride-catching" was Norse. The German word *brütloufti*, "bride-racing," and the old Norse word *quæn-fang*, "wife-catching," are both used in the sense of marriage. "Bride-racing" is thus Aryan; it is also Turanian. "Bride-catching" is thus Aryan; it is also Semitic.

Let us take a Turanian example of bride-racing, and clear our ideas as to what it means. In noticing the simulated conflict among the Kalmucks, I said they had also bride-racing. The ceremony, which is performed on horse-back, is described by Dr. Clarke. "A girl is first mounted, who rides off in full speed. Her lover pursues; if he overtakes her she becomes his wife. . . But it sometimes happens that the woman does not wish to marry the person by whom she is pursued. In this case she will not suffer him to overtake her. We were assured that no instance occurs of a Kalmuck girl being thus caught unless she has a partiality to the pursuer. If she dislikes him she rides, to use the language of English sportsmen, 'neck or nought,' until she has completely effected her escape, or until her pursuer's horse becomes exhausted, leaving her at liberty to return and to be afterwards chased by some more favoured lover." That is, the chase, where it leads to marriage, as it commonly does, is a

mere form, the woman meaning to be caught. As it is always preceded by a contract, fixing the bride's price and consenting to the marriage, it is undoubtedly a merely symbolical ceremony, in which the idea is that of "the unprotected female" trying to escape from her would-be captor. The chance of escape which it offers to a reluctant bride is an accident of a ceremony, the origin of which cannot possibly be referred to the desire to consult the bride's inclinations.

Vámbéry says that this "marriage ceremonial," no doubt with modifications from case to case, is in use among all the nomads of Central Asia. He describes it in the case of the Turkomans. The young maiden, attired in bridal costume, mounts a high-bred courser, taking on her lap the carcase of a lamb or goat. She sets off at full gallop, followed by the bridegroom and other young men of the party, also on horseback. She has always to strive, by adroit turns, &c., to avoid her pursuers, that no one of them approach near enough to snatch from her the burden in her lap. The chase ends, I suppose, in her being caught. "The game" is called *Kökbüri*.

But all wild tribes have not troops of horses, like the hordes of Central Asia. When the Australian, who gets his wives by the ancient methods *de facto*, chases a leubra, it is on foot. Should he ever reduce the race to a symbol, the symbol will certainly represent a foot-race. And this is the form of bride-racing among the natives of Singapore, who also, being accustomed to boating, have an aquatic variety of the form. They hold great jubilees, at the fruit season, near the groves of the tribe, which often lie together, and during these jubilees their marriages take place. "The marriage ceremony," says Mr. Cameron, "is a simple one, and the new acquaintance of the morning is often the bride of the evening. On the part of the suitor it is more a matter of arrangement with the parents than of courtship with the daughter; but there is a form generally observed which reminds one strongly of the old tale of Hippomenes and Atalanta. If the tribe is on the bank of a lake or stream, the damsel is given a canoe and a double-bladed paddle, and allowed a start of some distance; the suitor, similarly equipped, starts off in chase. If he succeeds in overtaking her, she becomes his wife, if not, the match is broken off. . . It is seldom that objection is offered at the last moment, and the race is generally a short one. The maiden's arms are strong, but her heart is soft, and her nature warm, and she soon becomes a willing captive. If the marriage takes place where no stream is near, a round circle of a certain size is formed, the damsel is stripped of all but a waistband, and given half the circle's start in advance; and if she succeeds in running three times round before her suitor comes up with her, she is entitled to remain a virgin; if not, she must consent to the bonds of matrimony. As in the other case, but few outstrip their lovers." This is the Kalmuck case over again. Singapore is not singular in the equatorial regions. We find the form both as bride-racing and as bride-catching in various quarters in the islands of the Pacific.

Let us now clear our ideas as to "bride-catching." It is the case of the unprotected female without a start and a run for it. Here is the Australian reality. When a man meets a woman alone, whom he likes, he tells her to follow him. If she refuses he beats her, knocks her down, and carries her

off. Rough gallantry! The mimicry of this is the form as "bride-catching,"—differing from the reality only in the degree of violence, and in its following on a contract of marriage. It is Aryan, as we saw, being Norse; it is Turanian, being observed by the Tunguzes and Kamchadales; it is Semitic, being the custom of many Arab tribes, notably of the Bedouins of Mount Sinai, and the Mezeyne of the Sinai Peninsula. The women, as a tribute to custom, must resist the capture. As Burckhardt says of the Bedouins, "the more the woman struggles, bites, kicks, cries, and strikes, the more she is applauded ever after by her own companions."

The form in this shape is of frequent occurrence among the native races of America. The way in which the capture is made among the tribes on the Amazons is very singular. "When a young man wishes to have the daughter of another Indian, his father sends a message to say he will come, with his son and relations, to visit him. The girl's father guesses what it is for, and, if he is agreeable, makes preparations for a grand festival. This lasts perhaps two or three days, when the bridegroom's party suddenly seize the bride, and hurry her off to their canoes. No attempt is made to prevent them, and she is then considered as married." Among the Terra del Fuegians we find bride-catching pure and simple. "As soon," says Captain Fitzroy, speaking of the Fuegians, "as a youth is able to maintain a wife by his own exertions in fishing or bird-catching, *he obtains the consent of her relations*, and does some piece of work, such as helping to make a canoe, preparing seal-skins, &c., for her parents. Having built or stolen a canoe for himself, *he watches for an opportunity, and carries off his bride*. If she is unwilling, she hides herself in the woods until her admirer is heartily tired of looking for her, and gives up the pursuit, but this seldom happens." Although the marriage is the subject of a contract, he must proceed in its constitution as if acting without consent. A little farther north, among the Coinmen and Caribs, the contract is unknown, and the usual way of getting a wife is fighting for or catching one.

Accompanying the form, in some of the cases of "bride-catching," is a custom which must have been handed down from a state of the greatest "wildness"—a state lower than savagery. Among the Mezeyne, for example, after the capture, the woman is let loose and flies to the mountains. The husband goes in search of her. For a long time the only intercourse between them takes place in the hills. The clandestine intercourse, after marriage, between the Spartan husband and wife, must have been the fainter tradition of this. The same custom prevailed in Crete. In Africa, in some districts, husband and wife for years meet only in the woods. The stealthy communication of husband and wife is required by custom also among the Nogais and Circassians.

We have just seen the form among some tribes of the Semites. Had the Jews this ceremony? I think it is almost certain they had. They had traditions of the system of capturing women for wives, *de facto*, and though they were an endogamous people, forbidden to marry foreign women, yet they allowed marriages with such women when made captive in war. The provision for marriage with foreign women, if captured, among tribes which in no other case allowed of marriage with foreign women, indicates a remarkable associa-

tion between capture and marriage. It is not easy to believe that such a regulation, existing among endogamous tribes, is referable to the feeling that a victorious warrior should have the full disposal of spoils of victory. It is much more likely that it is a relic of a time when the tribes—or rather the race from which they sprung—were not endogamous, but subject to that primitive tribal law against marriage within the tribe, which was everywhere the origin of the system of actual capture. And that system is symbolised to this day among other tribes of the same race. These facts and considerations are supported by some direct evidence. The writer of the article, Marriage, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, remarks that the Old Testament phrase, "taking a wife," would seem to require to be taken in its literal meaning in the run of cases; "the taking" being the chief ceremony in the constitution of marriage. If this is correct, it means that the Jews observed the form, for in many cases where the phrase occurs we know the marriages were preceded by contracts.

It remains that I should exhibit some instances of the Form of Capture in states of disintegration. Though everything connected with marriage is religiously regarded, yet are its ceremonies subject, like everything else, to the laws of growth and decay. In many cases the Form of Capture must have passed away; in many it is in the course of being obliterated. The marvel is that, the human race being so old, a ceremony which draws back to its wild youth should not long since have wholly disappeared. The progress of mankind, however, has not only been slow, but unequal in the different families. Thus it is that in our own day exist, at one and the same time, in different quarters, the reality of capture, the reality in stages of transition towards a symbolism, the form, and the form in the last stages of decay. Among the very rudest races we find the reality; among the ruder races, and in the ruder and more unmixed portions of the more civilized, we find the form; here and there, in the upper strata of the most civilized, we discern the mere shadow of the form. When the Form of Capture was perfect among the plebeians in Rome it had dwindled to scarcely recognizable signs among the aristocracy. It is now perfect among the primitive Berricors in modern France, as it was among the primitive Dorians in ancient Greece. It was till lately perfect in homogeneous Wales, when in heterogeneous England it had become disintegrated in the highest degree. Where many races are blended, many customs are jumbled. And the jumbling infers decay of respect for them and ultimately their obliteration.

The simulated fight is disintegrated when the symbol represents attack merely on the one side, as in the Irish and Roman examples, without representing resistance on the other. It is further disintegrated when neither the attack nor the defence is represented, and the tradition is satisfied by some faint symbol of the woman's captivity. With the Patricians at Rome it sufficed that the bridegroom should carry the bride over the threshold of his house, "because," as Plutarch says, "the Sabine women did not go in voluntarily, but were carried in by violence;" that he should part her hair with a spear "in memory of the first marriages being brought about in a warlike manner," a symbol full of suggestions. There is no doubt these are

what they bear to be—traces of the form of capture; faint signs taking the place of the perfect form. The Kökbüri, as described by Vámbéry, is become “a game,” a reflection of Kalmuck bride-racing, as described by Clarke. The disintegration once began, the ultimate shape or relic of the form depends on the infinite variety of accidents. There may remain a single sign or act, a pastime or a game, or a ridiculous proceeding with no apparent meaning. I shall be surprised if the reader, as he learned of the hurling of bamboos after the bridegroom among the Khonds, did not think of the hurling of old shoes after him among ourselves. It is a sham assault on the person carrying off the lady; and in default of any more plausible explanation, and I know of none such, it may fairly be considered as probable that it is the form of capture in the last stage of disintegration.

Greece, like Rome, presents us with the form in a disintegrated shape. In Sparta, latterly, it was enough for the bridegroom to catch up the lady and carry her from one room to another. So, among some of the Kalmuck hordes, the necessity for the appearance of a capture is satisfied by the act of putting the bride by force upon horseback when she is about to be conducted to the bridegroom's hut. And this minimum of pretence suffices in many cases. In North Friesland a young fellow called the bride-lifter lifts the bride and her two bridesmaids upon the waggon in which the newly-married are to travel to their home. In Pennsylvania the bridegroom himself carried the bride in his arms out of her father's house and set her on the waggon. In Egypt, when the bride, after her procession, arrives at the bridegroom's door, he issues forth, “suddenly clasps her in his arms, as if by violence, and runs off with her as a prize” into the house—the Roman threshold-crossing over again. The Bedouin bridegroom must force his bride to enter his tent; the Mussulman of India, the same who observes the mock siege, must carry her in like the old Roman. A similar custom existed in France, at least in some provinces, in the seventeenth century. In all these cases the shape of the form was analogous to that prescribed in the Sutras to the Hindus. At a vital stage of the marriage ceremony a *strong man* and the bridegroom forcibly drew the bride and made her sit down on a red ox-skin. Dr. Weber says this was one of the essential ceremonies in the constitution of the Hindu marriage. In the order of proceedings it followed the solemn seven steps which riveted the contract.

I have not attempted to classify these examples according to the races which furnish them. The races themselves have, I think, yet to be satisfactorily classified, and till that is done we must take human phenomena in the mass as we find them. So far as the philological classification goes the form of capture is at once Indo-European, Turanian, and Semitic. It is *human*; and the frequency of its occurrence is such as strongly to suggest that the phase of society in which it originated existed at some time or other almost everywhere. The instances which I have given fix the attention on a great many geographical points. And nothing in nature stands by itself. Each example leads us to contemplate a great area over which the form of capture was once observed, just as a fossil fish in rock on a hill-side forces us to conceive of the whole surrounding country as at one time under

water. Were I to examine all the customs which seem to me connected with the form, there would be few primitive races with which I should not have to deal. The form, which of old was so well marked in the peninsulas of Italy and Greece, may be traced thence, on the one hand, northwards through France and Britain, south-westwards through Spain, and north-eastwards through Prussia; on the other hand, northwards through ancient Thessaly and Macedonia into the mountainous regions on the Black Sea and the Caspian. It is now observed throughout Central Asia and everywhere among the races of the Mongolidæ. We may assume it of frequent occurrence in Africa, as among the red men of America, and the inhabitants of the Pacific islands. It occurs among several of the Semitic races. It occurs among the Hindus, and may be assumed to have been common among the aboriginal inhabitants of the plains of India, of whom we have well-preserved specimens in the Khonds of Orissa and the Kookies of Cachar.

Here ends the entertainment. In the *Code of Menu* is described the marriage called Racshasa. "The seizure of a maiden by force from her home, after her kinsmen and friends have been slain in battle, or wounded, and their houses broken open, is the marriage called Racshasa." "For a military man" this marriage, "as when a girl is made captive by her lover after a victory over her kinsmen," is "permitted by law." The code legitimated as marriage the union of the soldier with the woman he had fought for and won at the point of the sword. This privilege of the military was a relic of the system of capturing women for wives which had prevailed among the Hindus. I again hold up a light, in which you may see the significance of the mock sieges, and invasions, and fights, and flights of my collection. In these, at first sight unmeaning symbols, what a history! In our ancestry, what humiliation! My show is transformed in the bloody light, and every oddity becomes a horror. Race after race has told the same tale. "With us there was at first no marriage but the Racshasa. There was neither wooing, nor love, nor pity; and the wife knew not even to bow her head as she followed her lord over the dead bodies of her kinsmen." But with the lesson of humility there is a word of hope. If we, of the higher races of men, are yet of those who once were in such a case, and have come to be what we are; while with humble hearts we regard our origin and first estate, we may hopefully look to the future as holding in store for our species forms of life purer and higher than the present, by as much as the present are purer and higher than the past.

J. F. M'LENNAN.



[ABOUT PIANOFORTES.

"PIANOFORTES, sir! stuff, sir!" said my uncle: "the most abominable things ever invented. Girls do nothing in these days but strum on those confounded pianofortes. When I was a young man they used to be taught sewing and cooking; they didn't waste their time over trashy novels, and love songs, and pianos; but now, sir, they're not content with the occupations of sensible women, they must needs make fools of themselves, and ruin the patience and digestion of their fellow-creatures into the bargain. If I attempt to go to sleep after dinner, that pianoforte begins upstairs with the Dead March in *Saul*, or an imitation of the bagpipes; and when I complain, I am told that sleep after dinner is not good for me. In the morning, sir, that is to say when your intended wife is staying in the house, I am awakened by scales before breakfast. If I go to the sea-side for peace and quiet, I am driven out of the house by pianos on both sides; and if I go out to dinner, the men hurry over their wine and get upstairs to the women, who squall and bang the piano for the remainder of the evening. You tell me you are going to be married, sir; I am glad to hear it. You say that Emily plays; I am sorry for it. You say she'll want a new piano for her new house; I've no doubt of it. But if you suppose for one moment I am going to indulge idleness by encouraging the manufacture of those abominable instruments, you're mistaken, sir!" And so saying, my uncle took out his yellow silk bandana, threw it over his face, and leaning in his arm-chair, was soon asleep.

My uncle was the kindest-hearted of men, but this was his peculiar method of expressing himself. Emily certainly wanted a new piano, and we both thought the uncle might give us one; nor was I seriously discouraged at the manner in which he took my broad hint to that effect. "*Omnia vincit amor*," said I; and I was not far wrong, as the event proved, for it appeared that Emily knew a trick worth two of mine. I was just rising to leave the room, when I heard a soft, well-known step outside; the door gently opened, and Emily herself peeped in.

In another minute we had both passed out of the dining-room window on to the lawn. A spreading cedar stood black against the sky, and the first stars seemed to hang like pale gems amongst its branches. After a few turns we came in. My uncle had a curious objection to finding himself alone when he awoke. He liked to believe that he never exceeded his forty winks, and I used to humour him in this harmless fancy by generally appearing innocently in the room about the time he woke up, as though I had never left it. Much to our relief, we found him still asleep. There was an Indian sofa by the window. We sat down and continued our conversation in low tones.

"And now talk sensibly," said Emily, settling herself very demurely with her hands before her. (It was quite clear there was to be no more nonsense.) "You promised to tell me what you had been writing about the pianoforte." And so whatever sentiment there may have been in the garden was brought to end; and owning her gentle power to control and regulate my pulses—as

an instrument owns the touch of a cunning artist—I drew one or two loose notes out of my pocket, and collecting my wandering thoughts, began :

“ Before the Pianoforte came the Harpsichord, and before the Harpsichord came the Spinnet, and before the Spinnet came the Virginal, and before the Virginal came the Clavichord and Monochord, before these the Clavicytherium, before that the Citole, before that the Dulcimer and Psaltery, and before these the Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman harps, and lyres innumerable.”

“ But,” said Emily, “ you’ve already got right away from the pianoforte.”

“ Into the remotest ages of antiquity, my love ; it’s necessary, you know, in treating a subject philosophically ; but where would you like me to begin in the series ?”

“ What’s the citole ?” said Emily ; “ and what has the lyre and harp got to do with any of them ?”

“ Ah, I see I must begin at the beginning. Some of the harps of antiquity were struck with a quill or ‘ plectrum,’—we know very little more about them except that some were round and some square, some with three corners, some with more, some had ten strings, some thirteen ; and modifications of these varieties formed the staple of stringed instruments in the middle ages. The middle ages then had harps of all kinds, and out of the harps grew the psaltery, the dulcimer, and citole. The Psaltery* was a box with metal strings stretched over it ; it was plucked with a quill. The Dulcimer† was also a box with strings stretched over it ; but it was *struck* with two crooked sticks. The Citole, or ‘ little chest,’ was another box with strings stretched over it ; but it was played with the fingers. And now roll all these into one, and you get the first glimmering notion or embryo of a piano. A piano has three fundamental ideas—*Percussion* (hammer), *Vibration on sonorous box* (sounding-board), and *Finger touch through mechanical action* (keyboard). From the dulcimer, sometimes called *hackret*, or hack-board (alas, how many young ladies go back to the dark ages and turn their pianos into hack-boards!)—from the dulcimer, I was observing, you get *percussion with a hammer*, and from all three you get *the sonorous box*, or sounding-board ; but no one had yet thought of that crowning glory—that now, at length, so perfect and subtle a minister of touch, the *keyboard*. As early as the eleventh century the keyboard was applied to the organ, and some time afterwards an unknown Italian (perhaps Guido—not the painter, my dear) adapted it to stringed instruments, and hence arose the Clavicytherium or Keyed-lyre. For many reasons the Clavicytherium was not extensively popular, and for centuries after we read that at the feasts there was ‘ Cytolyng and eke harping, y° fyddle dovcmere, y° psaltery and voices sweet as bell.’ But little mention is made of the Clavicytherium, the ‘ dark horse’ which was, after all, to be the winner. The fact is, in those days people progressed by moving one step forwards and two backwards : e.g., the Clavicytherium was fitted with *catgut* strings and *plucked with quills*, called jacks ; and so, incredible as it may seem, the instrument in gaining a keyboard, actually lost its *metal* strings and the *percussion* touch ! The construction of the Clavicytherium was coarse and simple to a fault. I have no doubt that, like our first harmoniums, it was always getting out of order—keys sticking,

* Psaltery, from “ psalting,” singing. † Dulcimer, “ dulce melos,” sweet sound.

catgut snapping, and was, altogether, much less manageable and portable than hack-boards and citoles.

"The Clavichord* (1500) was a real advance; it was in most respects like the Clavicytherium, with the restoration of metal strings and the addition of that *sine quâ non* of all harmony—the damper. The damper, as every one knows, is a piece of cloth which descends upon the strings after they have been struck, to check the vibration and prevent the sounds running into one another.

"The Clavicymbal differed only from the Clavichord in shape; it bore the same relation to the Clavichord that a small square piano does to an upright semi-grand.

"With the Clavichord and Clavicymbal we enter civilized regions; instead of having to fall back upon unknown dulcimer players, copied from old manuscripts, and ladies out of stained windows with citoles on their laps, we have the solemn figure of old Sebastian Bach, with his neat periwig and silk stockings, thrumming those wonderfully melodious jigs and sarabands on his favourite instrument the clavichord. 'I find it,' he says, 'capable of expressing the most refined thoughts. I do not believe it possible to produce from any harpsichord or pianoforte (*i.e.*, a pianoforte of the Bach period) such a variety in the gradations of tone as upon this instrument, which, I allow, is poor in quality and small in scale, but extremely flexible.' In 1772 Dr. Burney visited C. P. E. Bach, and heard him play. 'M. Bach,' he writes, 'was so obliging as to sit down to his *Silberman clavichord*, on which he played three or four of his choicest compositions. In the pathetic and slow movements, whenever he had a long note, he absolutely contrived to produce from his instrument a cry of sorrow or complaint, such as can only be effected on the clavichord, and perhaps by himself.'

"The Virginal and Spinet were still nearer approaches to the pianoforte; they were an improved and more expensive kind of clavichord; they were much in vogue towards the end of the sixteenth century, and were found chiefly in the Elizabethan boudoirs of the fine ladies of that stirring and romantic epoch. Here, for instance, is a description of Mary Queen of Scots' virginal. It was made of oak, inlaid with cedar, and richly ornamented with gold; the cover and sides were beautifully painted with figures of birds, flowers, and leaves, and the colours are still bright. On the lid is a grand procession of warriors, whom a bevy of fair dames are propitiating by presents of wine and fruit."

"Why was it called a virginal?" here interposed my fair listener.

"Some think virginal refers to Elizabeth, the virgin queen. Dr. Johnson says it was a compliment to young ladies in general, who all liked to strum on the virginal. But another writer, with better judgment, reminds us how in the pleasant twilights of convents and old halls it served to lead sweet voices singing hymns to the Virgin. The very sound of the word '*virginal*' reminds me of St. Cecilia sitting, as Raffael has painted her, in a general atmosphere of music, with angels listening; or else the light must fall through stained glass upon old impanelled wainscots of dark oak, or upon purple velvet

* "Clavi," a key; "chorda," a string.

cushions and rich tapestry. And there, in some retired nook of an ancient palace, at sunset, my love doth sit, saith Spenser,

‘Playing alone, careless, on her heavenlie virginals.’

Or here is another picture drawn from life; it is to be found in the *Memoirs of Sir James Melvil*, 1683, ambassador from Mary Queen of Scots to Queen Elizabeth: ‘After dinner my Lord of Hundsen drew me up to a quiet gallery, that I might hear some musick (but he said that he durst not avow it), where I might hear the Queen (Elizabeth) play upon the virginals. After I had hearkened awhile, I took by the tapestry that hung before the door of the chamber, and seeing her back was towards the door, I entered within the chamber and stood a pretty space, hearing her play excellently well; but she left off immediately she turned about and saw me. She appeared to be surprised to see me, and came forward, seeming to strike me with her hand, alledging she used not to play before men, but when she was solitary, to shun melancholy. She asked how I came there. I answered, as I was walking with my Lord Hundsen, as we passed by the chamber door I heard such a melody as ravished me, whereby I was drawn in ere I knew how—excusing my fault of homeliness as being brought up at the court of France, where such freedom is allowed. Then she sate down low upon a cushion, and I upon my knees by her. She inquired whether my queen or she played best. In that I found myself obliged to give her the praise.’

“Again he writes—‘She (Elizabeth) asked me if she (Mary Queen of Scots) played well?’ I said, ‘Reasonably, for a queen.’ This reminds us of Handel’s reply to his royal patron, who asked him how he liked his playing on the violoncello. ‘Vy, sir, your highness plays like a Prince!’ I wrote a little sonnet the other day, my dear, which would apply equally well to Mary Queen of Scots at her virginal, or to you at your piano.”

“Oh, do please repeat it to me,” said Emily.

“I cannot recollect it, but the moon is already so bright, I think I can see to read it:—

“How oft when thou, my music, music playst
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently swayst
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envy those jacks that nimble leap
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips that should that harvest reap
At the wood’s boldness by thee blushing stand?
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O’er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blest than living lips!
Since saucy jacks so happy are in this
Give them thy fingers—me thy lips to kiss!”

“You shocking old cheat!” exclaimed my listener, giving me a gentle box on the ear; “that’s Shakspeare.”

“Well, I did not say that I *made* it, I only said I *wrote* it.” And with this feeble shuffle, I continued gravely:

"About the year 1700 the Virginal went out of fashion, and its place was finally taken by the improved clavichord, called *Spinnet*,* and later on harpsichord. In 1760, a first class harpsichord by Rucker, the most celebrated maker, cost one hundred guineas. A grand harpsichord looked precisely like a grand piano, only it was provided with two keyboards, one above the other, the top one being to the bottom one, very much what the swell keyboard of the organ is to the main keyboard. To every note there were four strings, three in unison, the fourth tuned an octave higher, and there were stops capable of shutting off or coupling any of these together. The *quality* of the sound depended upon the material of which the jack was made—whether, that is, the string was struck with cloth, quill, metal, or buff leather; the *quantity* did not depend, as in the piano, upon the finger touch, but upon the number of strings coupled together by the stops. It now at last occurred to admirers of the harp and violin that all refinement of musical expression depended upon touch, and that whereas you could only pluck a string by machinery in one way, you might hit it in a hundred different ways.

"The long-abandoned notion of striking the strings with a hammer was at length revived, and by the addition of this third and last element, the harpsichord emerged into the Pianoforte. The idea occurred to three men at the same time, about the beginning of the eighteenth century—Cristofali, an Italian, Marius, a Frenchman, and Schröter, a German; the palm probably rests with the Italian, although, so clumsy were the first attempts, that little success attended them, and good harpsichords on the wrong principle were still preferred to bad pianos on the right one; but the key-note of the new instrument had been struck in more senses than one—the object of centuries was, in fact, accomplished—the age of the quill, pig's-bristle, thorn, ivory tongue, &c., was rapidly drawing to its close. A small hammer was made to strike the string and awake a clear, precise, and delicate tone unheard before, and the 'scratch, with a sound at the end of it,' was about to be consigned, after a long reign, to an eternal oblivion.

"We cannot wonder at the old harpsichord and clavichord lovers, even the greatest of them, not taking kindly at first to the pianoforte; the keys required a greater delicacy of treatment, it became necessary for musicians and amateurs to change their style of playing, and this alone was enough to hand over the new instrument to the rising generation. Silbermann showed two of his pianofortes to Sebastian Bach, who praised them as ingenious pieces of mechanism, but complained of their feebleness of tone. Silbermann, nothing disconcerted, retired into his workshop, and, after some years of study, during which no expense was spared, he at last produced an instrument which even Bach, wedded as he was to the clavichord, pronounced to be 'without fault.' From that moment a rapid demand for Silbermann's pianos rose throughout Germany, they could not be made fast enough.

"Frederick the Great, who indulged in a variety of the most improbable pursuits, had several of them about his palace; and having the finest pianos, he was naturally anxious to hear the finest player in the world play upon them.

* From "spina," a thorn—hence "quill."

But Sebastian Bach, like other great 'spirits of the vasty deep,' would not always come when called for. At last, one night in the year 1747, as the king took up his flute to perform a concerto at a private concert in the palace, a messenger came in with a list of the guests already arrived. With his flute in his hand, the king ran over the names, and turning suddenly to the musicians, in a most excited manner, said, 'Gentleman, old Bach is come!' The great man had indeed alighted, after his long journey, at his son's house; but by express orders from the king he was hurried to the palace. The concert was suspended; no doubt the courtiers, in little groups, began eagerly discussing the new event; and the king's enthusiasm speedily spread through the assembly. Presently the door opens, and 'old Bach,' in his dusty travelling coat, his eyes somewhat dazzled with the sudden glare of light, steps into the midst of this lordly company of powdered wigs and doublets, and diamonded tiaras and sword hilts. His majesty, after a warm and unceremonious greeting, besought the great contrapuntist to improvise to the company; and Bach passed the remainder of the evening going from room to room, followed by troops of admiring court ladies and musicians, and trying '*forte pianos, made by Silberman.*'

"But the man who, more than any other, made the piano and pianoforte music popular in England and all over the Continent, was Muzio Clementi, born at Rome, 1752. At eighteen he composed his Op. II., which forms the basis of all modern pianoforte sonatas, and which Sebastian Bach observed, only the devil and Clementi could play. Clementi was educated in England, by the kindness of Mr. Beckford, and soon rivalled Bach as a popular teacher. In 1780 he went to Paris, and was perfectly astounded at his reception. He was dubbed the greatest player of the age, Mozart perhaps excepted, and soon afterwards left for Vienna, where he became acquainted with Mozart, the reigning star, father Haydn, and old Salieri, who was decidedly going off, and hated the new music, new pianos, and everything new. 'What right, forsooth, had these young upstarts to write music which the old men could not play? And such music too! Mozart was a charlatan, Beethoven an impostor, and even Schubert, the dear little quire boy, who might have carried on the glorious old Italian traditions, was becoming tainted, and writing music like Mozart!' Poor Salieri! if he could only have heard the seventh Schubert Symphony and the B minor Sonata, what would have become of him?

"One evening, Mozart and Clementi met in the drawing-room of the Emperor Joseph II., the Emperor and Empress of Russia were the only others present. The royal trio were longing for a little music; but how could one great master take precedence of the other? At last, Clementi, the elder of the two, consented to begin, which he did with a long improvisation, winding up with a sonata. 'Allons,' says the Emperor, turning to Mozart, 'd'raut los!' (now fire away!), and Mozart, after a short prelude, played one of his own sonatas. The royal audience appear to have been delighted, and probably thought the one about as good as the other; but Mozart observed of Clementi, 'He is a good player, and that is all; he has great facility with his right hand, but not an atom of taste or feeling!'

"The pianos used by Mozart and Clementi were the last improved pianos of

Stein, the successor of Silberman, with an extended compass of five octaves; yet in comparison with the commonest pianos now in use, these were but miserable machines. The genius, however, was even then alive who was destined to sweep away every imperfection in the working of the piano, and place it once and for ever on its present proud pedestal. Sebastian Erard was born at Strasburg, April 5th, 1752. His extraordinary mechanical genius early attracted the attention of all the scientific mechanics in France; every problem was brought to him and generally solved by him as speedily as incomprehensible sums in arithmetic used to be by the Calculating Boy. His manners were refined, and the force of his amiable and versatile character gained him admission into the highest circles. He lived in the homes of the French nobility, and amused them by the uninterrupted flow of bran new inventions and extraordinary mechanical contrivances. Nothing was too hard for him to accomplish, and nothing so good but what he could find means to improve upon it. In 1796 he made his first horizontal grand pianos, and Dussek played on one with great *éclat* in Paris in 1808. But the touch was still heavy and somewhat slow. It was not until 1823 that Erard produced an instrument susceptible of the finest gradations in touch; and thus, after laying down all the new principles which have since made his name so illustrious, he breathed his last at his country house, 'La Muette,' near Passey, on the 5th of August, 1831, at the age of seventy-nine.

"The greatest manufacturing firms in Europe are those of Erard, Broadwood, Collard, and Pleyel. *Touch and tone* are the two great touch(s)stones ('O fie!' said Emily) of a piano's excellence; speaking roughly, Erard will bear the palm for touch and Broadwood for tone. There are about two hundred well-known pianoforte makers, and each one has his own peculiar keyboard action, most of them being very slight modifications of those used by the four great firms. The strings of a Grand pull between eleven and twelve tons, or about twenty-five thousand pounds. There are forty-eight different materials used in constructing a piano, laying no less than sixteen different countries under contribution, and employing forty-two different hands. The finest piano may be obtained for about one hundred and twenty guineas. In the Great Exhibition of 1851, Erard's grand was valued at one thousand, Broadwood's at one thousand two hundred, and Collard's at five hundred guineas; but the extra money was to pay for the gorgeous cases. About twenty thousand pianos are annually fabricated.

"So much for facts, now for directions. Keep your piano out of damp rooms; never place it too near the fire or the window, or between them, or in a draught, but place it at least a foot from the wall, or in the middle of the room. Do not load the top of it with books; and if it is a cottage, don't turn the bottom—as I have known some people do—into a cupboard for wine and dessert. Keep the keys carefully dusted, and always shut down the lid when you have done playing. If you don't want the people next door to hear you practising, build your walls of hollow bricks, or fill them with chopped straw or sawdust."

"Well, you *are* getting dry," interposed Emily, as I rose from my low stool at her feet, and sat down on the sofa close by her side.

"I thought you liked what was practical, my dear."

"I think I like to hear about the players more than the pianos."

"Ah! how those old fellows would have stared if they could only have heard our modern pianists, Liszt or Thalberg, for instance; but the two I should have liked to hear best are Chopin and Mendelssohn. Fancy Chopin, in his dimly-lighted room in the Rue d'Autin, with Madame Sand, Heinrich Heine, Eugene Delacroix, and Liszt, for an audience. What dreams, what visions of moonlight, and deep deep seas, and island coasts! what exquisite subtleties of improvisation! Thoughts too rare almost for embodiment even in music: the growing and waning of love,—the forlorn hopes,—the inconsolable anguish,

'And the brief madness and the long despair!'

Or pass from this select circle to the gay and brilliant salons of Paris. The same pale, undisturbed figure is seated at the piano, surrounded by the loveliest women, and the leading wits and diplomatists of the wittiest and most diplomatic city in the world. From some dreamy *Notturmo* he glides imperceptibly into one of his magical *Mazourkas*, until the listeners around him begin to sway to and fro unconsciously, and the whole room seems to rock in measure to the perfect rhythm.

"But even Chopin, the refined, the quite magical, though somewhat morbid, must retire before the very sun-god of music, Mendelssohn, that bright seraphic being! so perfect 'all round'—no flaw in the man—clear, transparent, pure as crystal—and, like crystal, reflecting all the lights of heaven! I always thought of him so, and when his *Letters* appeared I felt my ideal was a true one, only far below the real. I think that every now and then God sends a perfect nature into the world—a nature truly balanced, and therefore truly sublime, tuned to a higher pitch of nobleness than the rest—just to show us what we might be—what we may become. And such was Mendelssohn, a great, a pure soul, full of celestial harmonies, the current of whose being set steadily upward from the beginning, even as the lark rises to Heaven, filled through and through with an ever more and more rapturous and intense melody!

"What must his playing have been? Can we wonder at the people recalling him again and again to the piano, that they might listen to such improvisation as has never been heard since? They owned the spell of his character; his music was himself. We realize something of this in listening to his 'Songs Without Words.' They are intensely individual, there is something approaching to a sense of personality about them; the joyous, passionate, fullness of life in No. 3, Book II.; the stirring high resolve of sustained indomitable effort expressed in No. 4, Book II.; the vague and pensive sadness of No. 1, Book V., gliding at last into rest;—all these are the thoughts and feelings of a noble human heart raised to their highest power of poetical expression! And I too owe a debt to these same 'Songs Without Words' that I can never forget, Emily! You were sitting alone, playing that sweet sad one on your 'heavenly virginals,'—the light of a July sunset was falling on your hair, I came so softly behind you, and presently you turned before the last chord had quite died away. Your cheeks were wet with tears; you told me you

thought I had left without saying good-bye, and that I did not care for you ; and then I told you how impossible it was for me to say good-bye to you any more ; and oh, my darling, what a happy evening that was for both of us and——”

“What are you two talking about?” growled my uncle, just waking out of an unusually profound sleep. Emily gave a little start. The fact is, I think my arm had stolen round her waist, and the little head, with its soft perfumed hair, was lying quite peaceably on my shoulder, and I was just about to imprint a—— “What are you two talking about, I say, young people?” repeated my uncle, thoroughly rousing himself, and waiting for an answer.

“Oh, uncle,” said Emily, “we thought you were asleep!”

“Well, miss, suppose I was asleep?”

“We are so sorry if we woke you, that’s all.”

“I’ve no doubt of it ; and now didn’t I hear you say something about a piano, eh?”

“Yes, Charles has been telling me how to prevent the sound of my piano being heard through the wall or ceiling.”

“Sensible fellow ! sensible fellow ! And pray how?”

“Oh, you must build the walls of hollow bricks or stuff them with sawdust.”

“Well,” said my uncle, rising, “if you promise to build the walls of your new house with hollow bricks, and fill them with sawdust, I’ll promise to give you a piano.”

“Oh, you dear old uncle !” exclaimed my faithless Emily, leaving me and throwing her arms round the old gentleman, “now won’t you really give me one without ? then I’ll never give you another kiss !” and she gave him at least half-a-dozen, one after another.

“Well, well,” said the old gentleman, recovering himself, “you saucy puss, I make no promises, mind !”

But we both knew that my worthy uncle had surrendered, and although nothing more was said upon the subject, I for one was not in the least surprised when about six weeks after our marriage my wife rushed frantically into my study one morning (just as I was touching up my great article for the *Protemperary Review* on “The Moral Influences of the Barrel Organ,”) with “Charles ! Charles ! there’s a grand piano come down from London for me, and it’s at the front door !”

“My dear,” said the present writer, laying down his pen, “there must be some mistake.”

“No, no ; it’s all right, it’s from that dear old uncle Fuswig. I knew he would !”

“Well, but how ever shall we get it in, and where is it to stand ? Shall we order the side of the house to be taken down, my love, and throw all our rooms into one ?”

“Come along, you stupid old thing,” says Emily, wild with impatience, and pulling me up out of my chair ; “come along and see it got out,—and bother the rooms !”

H. R. HAWES.

THE COMING IN OF THE "MERMAIDEN."

THE moon is bleached as white as wool,
 And just dropping under ;
 Every star is gone but three,
 And they hang wide asunder—
 There's a sea-ghost all in grey,
 A tall shape of wonder !

I am not satisfied with sleep,
 The night is not ended ;
 But look how the sea-ghost comes
 With wan skirts extended,
 Stealing up in this weird hour
 When dusk and dawn are blended !

A vessel ! To the old pier-end
 Her happy course she's keeping ;
 I heard them name her yesterday—
 Some were pale with weeping,
 Some with their heart-hunger sighed :
 She's in, and they are sleeping.

O now with fancied greetings blest,
 They comfort their long aching ;
 The sea of sleep hath borne to them
 What would not come with waking,
 But the dreams shall most be true
 In their blissful breaking.

The stars are gone, the rose bloom comes,
 No blush of maid is sweeter ;
 The red sun half way out of bed
 Shall be the first to greet her :
 None tell the news, yet sleepers wake,
 And rise, and run to meet her.

Their lost they have, they hold ; from pain
 A keener bliss they borrow.
 How natural is joy, my heart !
 How easy after sorrow !
 For once, the best is come, that hope
 Promised them "to-morrow."

JEAN INGELow.

THE UNDERTAKER'S MAN.

FOR the — day in April, 1865, I received three invitations: one to attend the funeral of a wealthy old bachelor, who had resided in Russell-square, and was to be buried in Highgate Cemetery; the second, to be one of a wedding-party at a house in Baker-street; and the third, to dine with a friend residing in one of the squares in South Kensington. As the wedding and the funeral were to take place about the same hour, and in different parts of London, it was impossible for me to attend both. I was not particularly interested in either. I knew but little of the young couple who were to be married; and I am no admirer of a wedding-breakfast. I do not like champagne in the morning, and have a strong dislike to the stereotyped twaddle—dignified by the name of speeches—of the breakfast-table. The gentleman whose funeral I was invited to attend was little more than a stranger to me; and the sole reason for his executors complimenting me with an invitation was that I had been called upon to witness his will. The turning-point which decided me in my choice between the two invitations was my wish to ascertain whether a distant relation of the deceased, whom I knew intimately, had been left any money. He was at the time a resident in India, and far from being in affluent circumstances.

The invitation, then, for the funeral was accepted; and at the hour appointed, the mourning coach drew up at my door to convey me to the house of the deceased in Russell-square. On arriving, I found two mutes, with the usual scarfs and a singular sort of black banners in their hands, standing at the door. As soon as I alighted from the carriage, one of them gave a prolonged, though subdued knock at the door, and then resumed his original position. I entered the house, and a respectable-looking, middle-aged man, with a white cravat, and a face of great solemnity, took my hat, and in a low solemn tone of voice asked me if I was a relative of the deceased. I told him I was not, and asked him why he made the inquiry. After giving a low sigh of relief (as if it gratified him to hear that my feelings were less likely to be lacerated from the fact that no relationship existed between me and the deceased), he softly replied that he wished to know whether he was to place a silk or a crape hat-band on my hat. Another attendant, with a face as solemn as his fellow's, now ushered me into a large dining-room, from which daylight had been studiously excluded,—the only light being from some candles on the table. In this room were assembled perhaps a dozen gentlemen, and it was easy to perceive that they did not belong to the undertaker's staff, for although dressed in black, there was not the slightest appearance of solemnity about them. They were conversing together in an ordinary tone of voice, about different topics of the day; not one among them even naming the deceased gentleman. Everything seemed to be taken by them in an ordinary business-like way, as if their presence was a compliment they were paying to the deceased, and nothing more.

Among the spectators, two only showed anything more than perfect indifference on the occasion. These were young men, who, while attempting

to put on the look of unconcern which characterized the rest of the party, were evidently in a state of satisfactory excitement. I immediately guessed them to be the two presumed heirs of the deceased, and that the principal subject of interest to them at that moment was the amount which would be left to each. My musings were interrupted by the entrance of two of the undertaker's men,—one carrying a large silver tray with glasses on it, filled with different sorts of wine, and the other a similar waiter with cakes. These men were admirable models of funereal propriety. There was a solemn expression upon their countenances, without the slightest tinge of sorrow in it; their faces seemed as inflexible as those we see on marble monuments; nothing, apparently, could either make them laugh or weep. As they handed the waiters round, they asked the guests, in a solemn, sepulchral tone of voice admirably suited to the occasion, whether they would take a glass of wine or some cake. When their duties were over, they again left the room, in the same noiseless way in which they had entered.

The next event was the entrance of two others, as solemn as the rest. One of them carried a large tray with black gloves on it, and the other, taking each gentleman in turn, fitted him with a pair. "Can you tell me your number, sir?" he inquired of me, with great solemnity. I told him I did not know it; and he chose two or three pairs of the size he thought would suit me. This man's face struck me more than any of the others, so rigidly solemn was it. After he had finished his duties with me, he proceeded to the others, and so on till all were provided with gloves, when he and his fellow silently left the room, closing the door after them. The next part of the ceremony consisted in several of the men entering the room, some carrying on their arms long black cloaks, while others carried hats, with the long hat-band fixed upon them. As I had suspected, I found there were only two, with crape, and these were assigned to the young men whose satisfied expression of countenance had led me to imagine them to be relatives of the deceased. We were now ushered in due form to the mourning coaches, four persons in each. I was assigned a place in the last with the doctor, the solicitor, and another individual, whose appearance and manners made me suspect he had only been invited to make the number complete. What he was I cannot form the slightest idea; he was certainly well dressed, but from the time he entered the carriage, until the body was consigned to the earth, he uttered not a single word; and as soon as the ceremony was over he disappeared, and we saw him no more.

In due time the funeral procession arrived at the cemetery, and the whole proceedings were carried through with the same air of cold, indifferent propriety which had hitherto distinguished the ceremony. On returning to the house, I found myself alone in the carriage with the doctor; the solicitor having entered one of the others, in which were the two heirs. The doctor was a chatty, good-natured, and shrewd little man of about fifty years of age, somewhat of a cynic, and very intelligent. I soon found myself perfectly at home with him; and the body having been consigned to the earth, we both seemed tacitly to admit that there was no occasion for any further solemnity of manner, and conversed fluently together.

"Did you know anything of the deceased?" I inquired; "he seems to have been little cared for, judging from the behaviour of those at the funeral."

"I knew little more of him than as a patient," said the doctor; "he was an ordinary sort of man, possessed of considerable wealth, of which he was very penurious. At the same time, I must say I never heard of an unworthy or dishonest action that he ever committed. His good qualities seemed to be all of a negative description; nothing particularly to admire, and certainly less to object to."

"Are not those two young men with crape hat-bands his heirs?" I asked.

"I believe so," said the doctor, "and they are of the same opinion; however, we shall know more on that subject by-and-by. They were the only persons of the party who showed the slightest interest in what was going forward, and their feelings seemed to be those of pure satisfaction."

"I remarked that," I said. "The money the old gentleman has left them, seems in this case, at any rate, to have neutralized any sorrow they might have felt at his decease."

"Exactly so," remarked the doctor, "and as far as my experience goes, I believe the worst thing a man can do, in five cases out of six, if he wishes for the love and affection of any individual after his decease, is to leave him a large sum of money. I have frequently noticed that a five-pound note given during life, is received with far greater gratitude by the legatee, than five hundred pounds left to him by will."

We conversed in this strain till the mourning coach had arrived at the house in Russell-square, where the will was read. As both the doctor and myself had anticipated, the two young men were left the bulk of the property. I was sorry to see that my poor friend in India, with a wife and a large family of children depending on him, had no legacy. My curiosity on that point being now satisfied, I left the house of sham mourning, and proceeded homewards, out of spirits and disgusted with the whole proceeding. The impression made on my mind by the funeral hung over me the whole day,—everything seemed coloured by it; I was gloomy myself, and doubtless that made every object assume the same tint in my eyes.

At last the hour arrived for me to dress for the dinner-party to which I had been invited. When I arrived at the house I found most of the guests assembled, and a very brilliant party they made. I was on terms of intimacy with more than one-half of those present, but still I could not raise my spirits to a point befitting the occasion. The servants and waiters (for several had evidently been hired) particularly attracted my attention as having the same solemn expression of countenance which I had noticed in the undertaker's men at the funeral in the morning. Although their duties were those tending to cause hilarity and good humour, they did not seem to take the slightest pleasure in their task, and had the dinner been in the family vault instead of the well-lighted dining-room, their faces could not have been more serious. Even when they had occasion to speak to any of the guests, when naming the dishes they presented to them, they did it in the sort of conventional whisper used by the undertaker's men in the morning. At last one spoke to me, on offering me some Moselle, in such a funereal tone of voice as

to especially attract my attention, and I turned round to look at him. Judge of my surprise when I recognized the face of the undertaker's man who had fitted on my gloves in the morning. From my surprised manner it was utterly impossible that the man did not notice me, still not the slightest change passed over his countenance. Had his face been a plaster cast his features could not have been more rigid. Several times during the meal I noticed him, and he evidently saw me, yet still the same immobility of feature continued. At last I gave up watching him, and conversed as fluently as I could with the other guests.

The dinner was a perfect success. At length it was time to depart, and one by one the guests left, until I was the last, having been engaged in an earnest discussion with my host, which lasted for some time after all the other visitors had gone. At last, I bade him good-bye, and descended to the lower room to get my hat and coat. Here I found the undertaker's man, and another person with him, who from the expression of his countenance might have followed the same occupation.

"It is a very wet night, sir," said my friend of the morning; "had I not better send for a cab?"

"I should be much obliged to you if you would," said I. "I hope there is a cab-stand near."

"No sir, I am sorry to say there is not; and on a wet night there may be some difficulty in obtaining one. I suspect we must send as far as the stand at Knightsbridge before one can be found. I am afraid you will have to wait pretty well half an hour."

"It cannot be helped," I replied; "and you will oblige me by sending for one immediately."

"Certainly, sir. John," continued he, addressing the other man, "put on your hat, and get an umbrella, and fetch this gentleman a cab as quickly as you can."

John immediately started on his errand, and I was left alone with my friend.

"Did I not see you at the funeral this morning?" I inquired of him.

"Yes, sir," he replied, "and a very nice funeral it was. The house I work for always do things in a capital manner; there is not one in the trade better up to their business."

"But if you are an undertaker's man, how is it that you can be a gentleman's servant at the same time?" I inquired.

"I am not a servant, sir," he answered; "I live with my brother, who keeps a greengrocer's shop; and as I can wait well at table, I am a good deal in request one way or another during the season. Before I saw you at the funeral this morning, I assisted in laying out a wedding-breakfast, and this evening, as you see, I am waiting at a dinner-party."

"Where may the wedding have been?" I inquired.

"At No. — Baker-street, sir."

By a singular coincidence, it was the very wedding to which I had been invited.

"You must have seen a good deal of life," I said to him.

"I have indeed, sir, seen a great deal of life; in our way of business one



THE SIGHING OF THE SHELL.

See page 56.



cannot help it. What with waiting at christenings and weddings, performing funerals, and attending at dinner-parties, I assure you we get quite philosophical."

I have written the word philosophical, as I strongly suspect the man intended to make use of it; at the same time I admit it might have been physiological or psychological, or a mixture of the three.

"And pray, which might have been your original occupation," I inquired, "the waiter, or the undertaker's man?"

"The undertaker's man was my original profession, and few men have had more experience in it than I have. I began at the bottom of the ladder and have worked up to the top rung. I have been at parish funerals, and I have also attended at the interment of princes of the blood royal." This was evidently said with the intention of arousing my admiration and respect, and I determined to humour him in his little vanity.

"And pray, which of your *professions* do you like best?" I inquired.

"Decidedly the undertaker's, sir; there is far more mind in it; waiting at table is all mechanical."

"Do you generally see as little feeling shown at funerals as there was at the one this morning?" I asked.

"It entirely depends, sir, upon who the parties may be, and what may have been their line of life. Among the rich, old bachelors are little cared for, as was the case with the gent we buried this morning. A great deal more of sorrow is shown for old maids than for old bachelors. In some houses I have seen old maids a good deal grieved for, but I never saw a tear dropped for an old bachelor. Generally I find the poor are much more sorrowed after than the rich."

"To what do you attribute the difference?" I inquired.

"Oh, sir, there are many causes. In the first place, those nearest in relationship to the rich are anxious to know what money has been left them; and they are always jealous of more being left to another than themselves. Again, the absence of ladies takes away from the sorrow of the scene, as of course they always cry more freely than the men; still, I understand, even with them, that they do not grieve as much as women of the poorer class do for their relatives. They are also interested in what money has been left, and then there are more people to console them. So what with that, and thinking how they will have their mourning made (as I hear from the ladies' maids, for of course I do not know it myself), their sorrow appears to be considerably softened. I made up my mind on this point when I was employed one day when very young on a heavy job in the country."

"A heavy job?" I inquired.

"Yes, sir, a heavy job."

"And pray what may a heavy job be?" I asked.

"What the newspapers call 'the funeral obsequies of the deceased nobleman.' I noticed there how little any one cared about him. He had lived a very fast life, and had been a very bad husband. His wife did not pretend to the slightest sorrow for him, and he was despised by his children; still it was a magnificent affair, and many hundreds of pounds were spent to do him honour—what for, I do not know, for never was a man less deserving of it."

"But I should have thought, that from the misery and degradation in which a great portion of our poor live, they would neither have the time nor inclination to grieve much for their relatives."

"You are very much mistaken, sir; the poor have far greater respect shown to them at their decease than most people imagine. You would be astonished if you knew how much they subscribed to their burial clubs in order to get a decent funeral for their families. Even amongst the poorest and worst, they will still rather pay for their funerals than have those dear to them degraded by a pauper's burial."

"And pray, what is there so terrible in a pauper's funeral?"

"Upon my word, sir, I don't know, unless it is that they look upon it as a sign that nobody cares for the dead person. This feeling is far more common among the women than the men. A poor man cares very little what becomes of his body after his death; but I have known women almost starving who had two or three pounds sewn up in their linen for the purpose of avoiding a pauper's funeral."

"To what do you attribute this excessive dislike to a pauper's funeral in women?" I asked.

"Well, sir, I have often been much puzzled about it, because a pauper's funeral may be performed as decently as one that you pay two pounds fifteen shillings for. I am half inclined to believe, that to be buried by the parish is held by them to be a sign that nobody cares for them, and this idea is frequently more terrible than death itself. No matter how slight the regard that may be shown, still they like to have somebody who does regret them. Some time since, before I left off attending paupers' funerals, an old woman who had been in the workhouse for some years, finding her death approaching, sent for the matron. 'Mrs. B——,' she said, 'you have always been very kind to me, and I am very grateful to you for it, but I want you to promise to do me one favour when I am dead. In my stays you will find four pounds sewn up. One I wish to leave to you, as a testimonial of your kindness—the other three I wish to be expended on my funeral. I know the Poor Law Guardians would claim the money if they could, but I have so great a dread of a pauper's funeral, that I have kept it all the time I have been in the house, and I hope you will see my wish carried out.' 'Certainly, Betty, I will. But is there no one you would like to leave the money to? I promise you if you are buried by the parish I will see that every respect is shown you, just as if you paid for a funeral yourself.' 'No, ma'am,' said Betty, after hesitating a moment, 'I have no relations whatever, they're all dead and gone; but I would rather have my own funeral paid for, and that you should superintend it. It will be a great comfort to me to know that when I die there will be one person in the world who will have as much regard for me as to see me decently buried.'"

"Then there is not much kind feeling existing between the inmates of the workhouse?" I said.

"Well, sir, of course they go there as old men and women, and they do not form friendships easily; still a death never occurs in a workhouse ward without leaving a greater effect on those in it than we noticed at that job we were at this morning."

"I should feel obliged," I said, interrupting him, "if you would speak of the interment of my deceased friend in somewhat more respectful terms than calling it a job."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I meant the funeral we performed."

I felt some objection to the word "performed," but after a moment's reflection I found it was so appropriate to the occasion, that I let it pass without observation.

"Then if no friendships are formed in a workhouse ward, how do the inmates show sorrow at the decease of one of their companions?"

"I don't mean to say absolute sorrow, sir, but a considerable degree of respect. If a man dies in the male ward, you generally find on the day of his funeral, all the rest will remain silent and reserved; talk little to each other; and apparently be absorbed in their own thoughts. In the women's ward, they generally cry a good deal, but it soon passes off—far sooner than with the men. I assure you, sir, there is a great deal that is wrong in the song, or piece of poetry, that you have heard—

" 'Rattle his bones
Over the stones;
He's only a pauper
That nobody owns.' "

"You seem to think," I said, "that women get over their grief sooner than men; is that really the case?"

"Yes it is, sir. Their sorrow is more expressive than the sorrow of men, and their affection is certainly so too; but they do not grieve so long."

"You mean respectable men, of course."

"No, sir. Even among the coarsest men, I have occasionally met with instances of great affection. If you will not be offended at my *affability*, I will give you a couple of proofs of the truth of what I say."

"So far from being offended," I replied, "you will oblige me particularly by so doing."

"Well, sir, my first case is that of a man, who was the ganger of a party of navvies. He was a fellow of about six feet two inches high, as strong as a horse; and about as ruffianly a brute as ever lived. He was a drunkard, and a bully, and none of his companions liked him, although from the amount of work he did and the order he kept, he was always in full employ, and earned very high wages. He had been married to a very decent sort of woman, whom he treated with indifference when sober, so long as she got his meals ready for him—and with great brutality when he was drunk. The woman died, and left a child, about three years of age. After her death, Bill Storks and his little girl went to reside with his sister, a widow woman, in Rotherhithe. Now Bill, who had not a single particle of affection for any other human being—not even his own sister—had a wonderful fondness for his child. He used to humour her in everything, and nothing was too good for her. One day, when she was about four years old, she was playing near the fire, and knocked over a kettle of water, which scalded her so severely that she died from the effects. Bill was away at the time, and as soon as he

received his sister's letter, telling him of the accident, he left the job he was on, and came home three parts drunk, and raving mad. His first act was to beat his sister cruelly, and then he burst into tears, and cried like a child over his little daughter. The police were obliged to interfere, and he was informed that if he laid his hand on his sister again, he would certainly be locked up, and taken before a magistrate. As soon as he was sober, however, he begged his sister's pardon for what he had done, and never laid his hands on her again. Our people had to perform the funeral, and I had the management of the job. The mourners consisted of Bill, his sister, and two navvies. With the exception of the woman, they were all pretty well intoxicated. The party lounged along, and in time we reached the churchyard. Bill looked not sorrowful, but defiant, and scowled around him, as if he should like to find somebody to quarrel with.

"All passed off quietly enough until the sexton threw some earth upon the coffin, when the words 'Dust to dust' were said by the clergyman. Bill then started up, and shaking his fist at the sky, made use of such expressions against God, for having taken his child away, that I should be sorry to repeat them. The clergyman looked astonished, and was evidently upon the point of speaking to Bill, when one of the navvies lurched up to him, and said, 'Don't mind him, sir, he has not got his head; and he don't know what he is saying on. You had better not speak to him, sir, he will be all right presently.'

"The clergyman took the hint and proceeded with the service, and when it was over the party returned homewards. Before they had got outside the churchyard walls Bill turned round, and began making use of the same language as before. The woman, terrified, put her hand upon his mouth and begged him to be quiet, reminding him that God had the rights to take his child if he pleased.

"'She's right, Bill,' said one of the navvies. 'Don't stand making a fool of yourself there.' And the party again turned homewards.

"That evening Bill, as well as his friends, got stupidly drunk upon beer. He returned home about eleven o'clock at night, when he threw himself upon the bed with his clothes on, and slept until the next morning. When he arose he came down stairs and found his sister in the room, and his breakfast spread out for him on the table. He took no notice of her, but seating himself at the table, poured out some tea, and began his meal; he had no appetite, however, and could not swallow a mouthful. He pushed the things from him in a spiteful sort of manner, and folding his arms on the table, he laid his head on them, and there sat quietly for some time.

"At last he arose from his seat, and looking mechanically round the room, his eye fell on a little basket, which had been a plaything of his child's. He took it up and examined it for a minute, and then began looking for other things which had belonged to her. He found a little rag doll which he himself had made for her, and also a coloured story-book he had once given to her. This he opened, and his eye rested on the picture of a lion, on which were the marks of her little fingers, for he had taught her to beat it, and say, 'Naughty lion.' These, with one or two other little things, he placed in the basket, which he tied over with paper, and then hung it on a

hook over the chimney-piece. As soon as he had done this he turned to his sister, who had come into the room. 'Don't let nobody touch that there, do you hear?' he said. 'Mind, if they do they shall hear of it again, I can tell you.' Then snatching up his hat he left the house, nor did he return to it again until the evening, and then he was, as usual, drunk.

"He continued this way of life for two or three days, and then resolved on going on a job into the country. When he left the house he gave especial directions as well as threats to his sister, against allowing any one to touch the basket; and then, without saying another word, he took up his bundle and went away. In about a fortnight's time he returned, in consequence of a quarrel he had had with his mates. They had been drinking together one evening at a public-house, when one of his comrades, who had joined him that day said to him, 'I was very sorry to hear about that poor child of yours, Bill.' Bill was at that moment drinking from a pewter pot. His eyes glared viciously at the man who had spoken to him, and, saying, with an oath — 'What do you speak about her for?' he dashed the pewter pot at the other's head. Fortunately it did not hit him, but struck the wall with such force that the pot was doubled up like a glove. This caused a great row among the other navvies, and Bill was obliged to leave. His first care on arriving at home was to examine the little basket, and he gave a growl of satisfaction on finding it had not been touched. He now loafed about London for some days, doing no work, and drinking. One morning after breakfast, when he was sitting quietly by the fire, his sister came into the room with her bonnet and shawl on. 'Where are you going to, old gal?' he said, good-naturedly. 'I am going,' she said, 'to get something for dinner, or you will have to go without one. Stop a minute,' he said, 'and I'll go with you; only give me time to put on my boots.' He left the room, and his sister seated herself on a chair to wait until he was ready. She waited for more than half an hour, and then went out to see what he was about. She had hardly got to the door of the room before she gave a loud scream and fell senseless to the floor. Before her, in an outhouse in the yard, she saw her brother hanging by his neck to one of the rafters. As soon as she recovered herself she called for assistance, and they found the wretched man was quite dead. He had never been able to get over the loss of his child, and at last it became so oppressive to him that he put an end to his life.

"The other case is that of a poor widow who, with her two daughters (one of them a great cripple), lived in one room. They had formerly seen much better days, and were respectable. Although very industrious they lived in great poverty, maintaining themselves by any little jobs of needlework they could get. A time of distress, however, came on, and work was not very plentiful, and the poor cripple became worse in consequence of bad living. By way of making their money go further, they gave up the doctor who usually attended them, and obtained a ticket for the dispensary instead. The dispensary doctor was a very kind, humane, and skilful man, and paid them every attention in his power; but still the cripple did not improve, and at last they began to be greatly alarmed about her.

"One day the widow said to him, 'Doctor, I am very uneasy about my

child. I wish you would tell me candidly whether there is any danger,' 'I am sorry to say I should not be telling you the truth if I said there was not; at the same time she may certainly live a considerable time yet. Everything will depend upon the way we keep up her constitution.' 'I am sure, sir,' said the widow, 'she will willingly take any medicines you may send her.' 'Medicine will do her very little good,' said the doctor, 'beyond taking a little cod-liver oil. What she wants is good nursing, good air, and plenty of nourishment; the first, I know she has; the second, I fear she cannot get; and you must make every effort to obtain the third. Meat she must have every day, in some shape or other; beef-tea would be as good as anything for her; and she ought also to have at least a pint of porter, and a glass or two of port wine.'

"The poor woman sighed when she heard the doctor's directions, but made no remark. There was only one way of obeying them; and that was by pawning her things as far as they would go. This, however, was not done without the mother and the other daughter suffering great privation in consequence. I believe they lived upon nothing but bread and water, and very little of that. The poor cripple noticed how little they took, and pressed them to take some of the things they had procured for her; but they made excuse that they had no appetite, and did not care for meat or beer.

"At last the poor cripple gradually got worse, and died, just when their means were nearly exhausted. It was really beautiful to see the attention and kindness shown to the poor girl during her last illness, by both mother and sister. She required a good deal of nursing; and night and day they were unceasing in their attendance on her. One was always on duty, while the other worked hard with her needle, to obtain what little money they could by soldiers' shirt-making. They never appeared to be tired, and the knowledge that they were benefiting the poor girl seemed to keep up their strength. After her death they had, of course, to bury her; but how to do this they did not know, without asking the parish to let them have a pauper's funeral. This, however, the mother and daughter would on no account allow; and they set to work, night and day, with their needle, to earn, if possible, enough to pay the expenses of a funeral of the cheapest sort. They did not, however, succeed; and at last the other lodgers began to complain of their keeping the body so long in the room. They wanted one pound still to make up the required sum; and the mother—in despair—went to the parish officers, and asked whether they would be kind enough to let her have a sovereign in order to bury her daughter. This could not be done; for the Poor Law prohibits it. The clerk told her the Guardians were only allowed to pay the whole or none. What to do now, the poor woman did not know! To submit to a pauper's funeral she would not; and to pay for another she could not. At last our governor came to her help, and he said to her, 'My good soul, I will tell you what I will do. I must send a parish coffin in the day time to your house, that all may seem fair and straightforward; but in the evening I will take it away and leave you another; the Guardians will pay me for a parish funeral, and you can make it up to me after it is over, and I will return them the money.'

"Well, the poor woman thankfully accepted the offer, and paid in advance what money she had in hand. The funeral was ordered to take place the next day,—and a very decent one it was, as I know, having conducted it myself. The mother and daughter were the only mourners; and I never saw greater sorrow than theirs. I noticed the widow, as she stood by the grave, weeping bitterly. I think I see her now,—a tall, pale-faced, thin-looking woman; and when it came to 'dust to dust, and ashes to ashes,' she sank on her knees in a very curious manner. It was not as if she had no strength, but it seemed rather as if some heavy hand had been placed on the back of her neck, against her will, which pressed her down, down, on her knees, at last bending her head almost to the earth.

"The funeral over, we returned to the house. The mother and daughter were sorrowful enough all that day, there was no doubt of it. The next morning they opened the window and commenced cleaning the room; they were silent and sad as they were putting things away—but still there were no tears. As soon as they had got things a little put to rights, they again set to work to earn sufficient money to pay the balance of the funeral expenses to our governor. He was a good-natured man, and told them there was no necessity, as the parish would not ask for the money, 'he was sure.' They told him they were much obliged to him, but it was a mark of respect to the one who was dead; and they were determined to pay every shilling—which they honestly did. When the amount was made up, all sorrow seemed to have left them. Understand me, sir, I do not mean to say that they did not love the poor girl as dearly as ever; but they did not grieve for her. They now managed to get on a little bit in the world; and six months after the death of her sister, the other girl married, and is now doing very well, and her mother still lives with her.

"There was another case I met with——" Here a violent ringing was heard at the door.

"Here's your cab, sir," said the undertaker's man, breaking off suddenly, and hurriedly helping me on with my coat, and putting my hat in my hand, as if he wished to get home as soon as possible. He accompanied me to the street door, where I saw his companion, whom he had sent for the cab.

"I am sorry I have kept you waiting, sir," he said; "but I had a good deal of difficulty in finding a cab; it is such a nasty night, they are very difficult to be had."

"I am much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken," I replied, slipping at the same time half-a-crown into his hand.

My loquacious friend noticed the gift, and immediately the familiarity of his manner ceased, and he again assumed the solemn aspect natural to the undertaker's man. The two now accompanied me across the pavement to the cab, assisting me as I entered it in the same manner they are accustomed to do on helping persons into a mourning coach. They then closed the cab door, and retreating under the portico, stood watching me on each side of the street door, with the solemn aspect of a couple of mutes. The coachman then drove off, and I threw myself back in the cab,—reflecting during my way home on the mutability of human affairs.

WILLIAM GILBERT.

THE SIGHING OF THE SHELL.

"LISTEN, darling, and tell to me
What the murmurer says to thee,
Murmuring 'twixt a song and a moan,
Changing neither tune nor tone."

"Yes, I hear it, far and faint,
Like thin-drawn prayer of drowsy saint;
Like the falling of sleep on a weary brain,
When the fevered heart is quiet again."

"By smiling lip and fixed eye,
You are hearing more than song or sigh:
The wrinkled thing has curious ways—
I want to know the words it says."

"I hear a wind on a boatless main
Sigh like the last of a vanishing pain;
On the dreaming waters dreams the moon,
But I hear no words in their murmured tune."

"If it does not say that I love thee well,
'Tis a senseless, ill-curved, worn-out shell;
If it is not of love, why sigh or sing?
'Tis a common, mechanical, useless thing."

"It whispers of love—'tis a prophet-shell—
Of a peace that comes, and all shall be well;
It speaks not a word of your love to me,
But it tells me to love you eternally."

GEORGE MACDONALD.

THE TRAGEDY IN THE PALAZZO BARDELLO.

A TALE IN FOUR PARTS.

I.

THE sun had been up for the best part of an hour; the golden haze in the east was slowly melting away; the sluggish tide of bullock trucks had fairly set in along the Via Sacra; and a faint, universal stir of awakening life was to be felt rather than heard in the pleasant morning air, when a certain Englishman, Hugh Girdlestone by name, rose from his lounging attitude against the parapet of the Tower of the Capitol, and prepared to be gone. He had been standing there in the same spot, in the same attitude, since the first grey of the dawn. He had seen the last star fade from the sky. He had seen the shadowy Sabine peaks uplift themselves one by one, and the

Campagna emerge, like a troubled sea, from the mystery of the twilight. Rome, with its multitudinous domes and bell-towers, its history, its poetry, its fable, lay at his feet. Yonder the Coliseum, brown, vast, indistinct against the light, with the blue day piercing its topmost arches; to the left the shapeless ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars; to the right, faintly visible above the mist, the pyramid of Caius Cestius, beside which, amid a wilderness of sweet wild violets, lie the ashes of John Keats; nearer still, the sullen Tiber eddying over the fast-vanishing piers of the Pons Emilius; nearest of all, the Forum, with its excavations, its columns, its palace-fronts, its triumphal arches, its scanty turf, its stunted acacias, its indescribable air of repose and desolation; and beyond and around all, the brown and broken Campagna, bounded on the one hand by long chains of snow-streaked Apennines, and on the other by a shining zone of sea. A marvellous panorama! Perhaps, taking it for all in all, the most marvellous panorama that Europe has to show. Hugh Girdlestone knew every feature of it by heart. He was familiar with every crumbling tower and modern campanile, with every space of open piazza, with every green enclosure, with the site of every famous ruin, and the outline of every famous hill. It was his favourite haunt—the one pageant of which his eyes and his imagination were never weary. He had seen the sun rise and set upon that scene many and many a time, both now and in years past. He might, in all probability, stand in the same spot and witness the same gorgeous spectacle to-morrow; and yet he lingered there as fondly as if this visit were his first, and left as reluctantly as if it were destined to be his last.

Slowly and thoughtfully he went his way, out through the spacious courtyard, past the bronze horse and his imperial rider, down the great steps, and along the *Via Ara Cœli*. Passing the church of the Jesuits, he paused for a moment to listen to the chanting. As he did so, a Campagna drover in a rough sheepskin jacket stopped his truck to kneel for a moment on the lowest step and then trudge on again; and presently an Albano woman lifted the ponderous leather curtain and came out, bringing with her a momentary rush of rolling harmonies. The Englishman listened and lingered, made as if he would go in, and then, with something of a smile upon his lip, turned hastily away. Going straight on, with his head a little thrown forward and his hat pulled somewhat low upon his brow, he then pushed on at a swift, swinging stride, proceeding direct to the post-office, and passing the Pantheon without so much as a glance.

Manly, well-born, well-educated, gifted with a more than ordinary amount of brains, and, perhaps, with a more than ordinary share of insular stubbornness, Hugh Girdlestone was just one of those men whom it does one good to meet in the streets of a continental city. He was an Englishman through and through; and he was precisely that type of Englishman who commands the respect, though seldom the liking, of foreigners. He expressed and held to his opinions with a decision that they disliked intensely. His voice had a ring of authority that grated upon their ears. His very walk had in it something characteristic and resolute that offended their prejudices. For his appearance, it was as insular as his gait or his accent. He was tall, strongly made, somewhat gaunt and swift-looking about the limbs, with a slight stoop

in the shoulders, and a trick of swinging his gloves in his right hand as he went along. In complexion and feature he was not unlike the earlier portraits of Charles II. The lines of his face were less harsh, and his skin was less swarthy; but there was the same sarcastic play of lip, and now and then a flash of the same restless fire in the eye. Nor did the resemblance end here. It came out strongest of all in a mere passing shadow of expression—that expression of saturnine foreboding which Walpole aptly defined as the “fatality of air” common to the line of the Stuarts. The look was one which came to his face but rarely—so rarely that many of his intimate acquaintances had never seen it there; but it started to the surface sometimes, like a hidden writing, and sometimes settled like a darkness on his brow.

The main facts of his story up to the morning of this day—this 13th of February, 1857—may be told in a few lines. He was the son of a wealthy Derbyshire squire, had taken honours at Cambridge, and had been called to the bar some four or five years back. As yet he could scarcely be said to have entered actively upon his professional life. He had written an able treatise on the law of International Copyright, and edited an important digest of Chancery practice. He had also been for years in the habit of contributing to the best periodical literature of the day. Within the last four months, after a prolonged opposition on the part of her nearest relatives, he had happily married a young lady of ancient Roman Catholic family and moderate fortune, to whom he had been attached from boyhood. They were now spending a long honeymoon in Rome, and were as perfectly happy as a pair of lovers in a fairy tale. When it is added that she was just twenty-two and he thirty-four years of age, the outline of their little history is made out with sufficient clearness for all the purposes of this narrative.

Pushing on, then, at his eager pace, Hugh Girdlestone came presently to the post-office and inquired for his letters. There was but one—a square, blue-looking, ill-favoured sort of document, sealed with a big office seal and addressed in a trim business hand. He had to show his passport before the clerk would trust it beyond the bars of the little cage in which he sat, and then it was overweight, and he was called upon to pay forty-six bajocchi for extra postage. This done—and it seemed to him that the clerk was wilfully and maliciously slow about it—Hugh Girdlestone crushed the letter into an inner breast pocket, and turned away. At the door he hesitated, looked at his watch, crossed over, withdrew into the shade of a neighbouring *porte cochère*, took his letter out again, and tore it open. It contained two enclosures: the one a note from his publishers, the other a letter of credit upon a great Roman banking-house. He drew a deep breath of satisfaction. He had been expecting this remittance for several days past, not altogether with anxiety, for he was in no immediate need of money, but with some degree of impatience; for the fate of more than one project was involved in the sum which this letter of credit might chance to represent. The extension of their tour as far as Naples, the purchase of certain bronzes and cameos, and the date of their return to England, were all dependent upon it. It was no wonder, then, that Hugh Girdlestone's brow cleared at sight of the amount for which he found himself entitled to draw upon the princely establishment in the Piazza

Venezia. It exceeded his expectations by nearly one-half, and made him a rich man for the next three months.

Having read the letter and folded the enclosure carefully away in his pocket-book, he then struck off in a north-easterly direction towards some of those narrow thoroughfares that lie between the Tiber, the Corso, and the Piazza di Spagna.

The streets were now beginning to be alive with passengers. The shopkeepers were busy arranging their windows; the vetturini were ranging themselves in their accustomed ranks; the beggars were lazily setting about their professional avocations for the day; and the French regiments were turning out, as usual, for morning parade on the Pincio. Here and there a long-haired student might be seen with his colour-box under his arm, trudging away to his work of reproduction in some neighbouring gallery; or a *guarda nobile*, *cigarette en bouche*, riding leisurely towards the Vatican. Here and there, too, on the steps of the churches and at the corners of the streets, were gathered little knots of priests and mendicant friars, deep in pious gossip and redolent less of sanctity than garlic.

But to Hugh Girdlestone these sights and sounds were all too familiar to claim even passing attention. He went on his way, preoccupied and unobservant, with a face of happy thoughtfulness and a head full of joyous hopes and projects. Life had, perhaps, never seemed so bright for him as at that moment. The happy present was his own, and the future with all its possible rewards and blessings lay, as it were, unfolded before him. It was not often that he was visited by a holiday mood such as this; and, English as he was, he could scarcely forbear smiling to himself as he went along. Coming presently, however, into a long picturesque street lined with shops on both sides from end to end, he slackened his pace, shook off his reverie, and began loitering before the windows with the air of a purchaser.

Pausing now at a cameo-cutter's, now at a mosaicist's, now at a jeweller's, hesitating between the bronze medals in this window and the antique gems in that, he came presently to one of those shops for the sale of devotional articles, one or more of which are to be found in almost every street of Rome. Here were exquisitely carved rosaries in cedar and coral and precious stones, votive offerings in silver and wax, consecrated palm, coloured prints of saints and martyrs in emblematic frames, missals, crosses, holy water vessels, and wreaths of immortelles. Here also, occupying the centre of the window and relieved against a stand of crimson cloth, stood an ivory crucifixion designed after the famous Vandyke at Antwerp, and measuring about ten inches in height. It was a little gem in its way—a tiny masterpiece of rare and delicate workmanship. Hugh Girdlestone had seen and admired it many a time before, but never till now with any thought of purchase. To-day, however, the aspect of affairs was changed. His letter of credit troubled his peace of mind and oppressed him with an uneasy sense of wealth. He longed to buy something for his little bride at home, and he knew that he could find nothing in all Rome which she would prefer to this. She would appreciate it as a piece of art, and prize it as a most precious adjunct to her devotions. She would love it, too, for his dear sake, and her eyes would rest upon it when she prayed for

him in her orisons. Dear, pious, tender little heart! it should be hers, cost what it might. He would take it home to her this very morning. What pleasure to see the glad wonder in her eyes! What pleasure to give her back smile for smile and kiss for kiss, when she should fly into his arms to thank him for the gift!

So Hugh Girdlestone went in and bought it, reckless of the breach it made in his purse, and caring for nothing but the delight of gratifying what he so dearly loved.

That he, an ultra liberal thinker in all matters religious and political, should select such a gift for his wife, was just one of those characteristic traits that essentially marked the man. Setting but slight value on all forms of creeds, and ranking that of the Romanist at a lower level than most, he could yet feel a sort of indulgent admiration for the graceful side of Roman Catholic worship. The flowers, the music, the sculpture, the paintings, the perfumes, the gorgeous costumes, gratified his sense of beauty; and, regarding these things from a purely æsthetic point of view, he was willing to admit that it was a pretty, poetical sort of religion enough—for a woman.

Carrying the ivory carving carefully packed in a little oblong box under his arm, Hugh Girdlestone then hastened homewards with his purchase. It was now ten o'clock, and all Rome was as full of stir and life as at mid-day. His way lay through the Piazza di Spagna, up the great steps, and on through the Via Sistina, to a certain by-street near the Quattro Fontane, where he and his little wife occupied an upper floor in a small palazzo situated upon one of the loftiest and healthiest points of the Quirinal hill. As he neared the spot, a sense of pleasurable excitement came upon him. He smiled, unconsciously to himself, and, scarcely knowing that he did so, quickened his pace at every step. To the accustomed beggar at the corner he flung a double dole in the joyousness of his heart; to a lean dog prowling round the *cortile*, a biscuit that chanced to be in his pocket. Happiness disposes some people to benevolence, and Hugh Girdlestone was one of that number.

Up he went—up the broad stone staircase which served as a general thoroughfare to the dwellers in the Palazzo Bardello; past the first landing, with its English footman, insolently discontent, lolling against the half-opened door; past the second landing fragrant with flowers, the temporary home of a wealthy American family; past the third, where, in an atmosphere of stormy *solfeggi*, lived an Italian tenor and his wife; and on, two steps at a time, to the fourth, where all that he loved best in life awaited his coming! There he paused. His own visiting card was nailed upon the door, and under his name, in a delicate female hand, was written that of his wife. Happy Hugh Girdlestone! There was not a lighter heart in Rome at that moment when, having delayed an instant to take breath before going in, he pulled out his latch-key, opened the gates of his paradise, and passed into the shady little vestibule beyond.

At the door of the salon he was met by Margherita, their Roman servant—a glorious creature, who looked as if she might have been the mother of the Gracchi, but who was married, instead, to an honest water-carrier down by the Ripetta, and was thankful to go out to service for some months in every year.

"Hush!" she whispered, with her finger on her lip. "She sleeps still."

The breakfast lay on the table, untouched and ready; the morning sunshine flamed in at the windows; the flowers on the balcony filled the air of the room with a voluptuous perfume. It was a day of days—a day when to be still in bed seemed almost like a sacrilege—a day when, above all others, one should be up, and doing, and revelling in the spring-time of the glad new year. Hugh Girdlestone could scarcely believe that Margherita was in earnest.

"Sleeps!" he repeated. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that the Signora has not yet rung her bell."

"But is she still in bed?"

"Still in bed, Signore, and sleeping soundly. I stole in about half-an-hour ago, and she never heard me. I would not wake her. Sleep is a blessed thing, and the good God sends it."

The Englishman laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"One may have too much, even of a blessing, my good Margherita," he said. "I shall wake her, at all events, and she will thank me for doing so. See—I have something here worth the opening of one's eyes to look upon!"

Margherita clasped her hands in an ecstasy of devotional admiration.

"*Cielo!*" she exclaimed. "How beautiful!"

He placed the carving on the stand of red cloth, and then, going over to the balcony, gathered a handful of orange-blossoms and crimson azalias.

"We must decorate our altar with flowers, Margherita," he said, smiling. "Fetch me those two white vases from the chimney-piece in the ante-room."

The vases were brought, and he arranged his bouquets as tenderly and gracefully as a woman might have arranged them. This done, he stole to the bedroom door, opened it noiselessly, and peeped in.

All within was wrapt in a delicious, dreamy dusk. The jalousies were closed and the inner blinds drawn down; but one window stood a few inches open, thus admitting a soft breath of morning air, and now and then a faint echo from the world beyond. He advanced very cautiously. He held his breath—he stole on a step at a time—he would not have roused her for the world till all was ready. At the dressing-table he paused and looked round. He could just see the dim outline of her form in the bed. He could just see how one little hand rested on the coverlid, and how her hair lay like a lustrous cloud upon the pillow. Very carefully he then removed her dressing-case and desk from a tiny table close by, carried it to the side of the bed, and placed it where her eyes must first greet it on waking. He next crept back to the salon for the ivory carving; then for the flowers; and then arranged them on the table like the decorations of a miniature shrine.

And all this time she neither woke nor stirred.

At last, his pretty little preparations being all complete, the young husband, careful even now not to startle her too rudely, gently unclosed the jalousies, drew aside the blinds, and filled the room with sunshine.

"Ethel," he said. "Ethel, do you know how late it is?"

But Ethel still slept on.

He moved a step nearer. Her face was turned to the pillow; but he could see the rounded outline of her cheek, and it struck him that she looked

strangely pale. His heart gave a great throb; his breath came short; a nameless terror—a terror of he knew not what—fell suddenly upon him.

"Ethel!" he repeated. "My darling—my darling!"

He sprang to the bedside—he hung over her—he touched her hand, her cheek, her neck—then uttered one wild, despairing cry, and staggered back against the wall. She was dead.

Not fainting. No; not even in the first horror of that moment did he deceive himself with so vain a hope. She was dead, and he knew that she was dead. He knew it with as full and fixed a sense of conviction as if he had been prepared for it by months of anxiety. He did not ask himself why it was so. He did not ask himself by what swift and cruel disease—by what mysterious accident, this dread thing had come to pass. He only knew that she was dead; and that all the joy, the hope, the glory of life was gone from him for ever.

A long time, or what seemed like a long time, went by thus; he leaning up against the wall, voiceless, tearless, paralysed, unable to think, or move, or do anything but stare in a blank, lost way at the bed on which lay the wreck of his happiness.

By-and-by—it might have been half an hour, or an hour, later—he became dimly conscious of a sound of lamentation; of the presence of many persons in the room; of being led away like a child, and placed in a chair beside an open window; and of Margherita kneeling at his feet and covering his hands with tears. Then, as one who has been stunned by some murderous blow, he recovered by degrees from his stupor.

"Salimbeni," he said, hoarsely.

It was the first word he had spoken.

"We have sent for him, Signore," sobbed Margherita. "But—but——"

He lifted his hand, and turned his face aside.

"Hush!" he replied. "I know it."

Signor Salimbeni was a famous Florentine surgeon who lived close by in the Piazza Barberini, and with whom Hugh Girdlestone had been on terms of intimacy for the last four or five months. Almost as his name was being uttered, he arrived—a tall, dark, bright-eyed man of about forty years of age, with something of a military bearing. His first step was to clear the place of intruders—of the English family from the first floor, of the Americans from the second, of the Italian tenor and his wife, and of the servants who had crowded up *en masse* from every part of the house. He expelled them all, civilly but firmly; locked the door behind the last; and went alone into the chamber of death. Hugh Girdlestone followed him, dull-eyed, tongue-tied, bewildered, like a man half roused from sleep.

The surgeon bent silently over the corpse; turned the poor white face to the light; held a mirror to the lips; touched the passive hand; lifted first one eyelid, then the other; and felt for the last lingering spark of vital heat on the crown of the head. Then he shook his head.

"It is quite hopeless, my friend," he said, gently. "Life has been extinct for some two hours or more."

"But the cause?"

Signor Salimbeni slightly shrugged his shoulders.

"Impossible to tell," he replied, "without a proper examination."

The widower buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud.

"Whether the seat of this mischief be in the brain," continued Signor Salimbeni, "or whether, as I am more inclined to suspect, it should be sought in the heart . . ."

He broke off abruptly—so abruptly, and with such a sudden change of voice, that Hugh Girdlestone was startled from his apathy. He looked up, and saw the surgeon staring down with a face of ashy horror at the corpse upon the bed.

"Dio!" he faltered. "What is this?"

He had laid back the collar of the nightdress and bared the beautiful white bosom beneath; and there, just above the region of the heart, like a mere speck upon a surface of pure marble, was visible a tiny puncture—a spot so small, so insignificant, that but for a pale violet discoloration spreading round it like a halo, it would perhaps have escaped observation altogether.

"What is this?" he repeated. "What does it mean?"

Hugh Girdlestone answered never a word, but stood in stony silence with his eyes fixed on the fatal spot. Then he stooped, looked into it more narrowly, shuddered, rose once again to his full height, and less with his breath than by the motion of his lips, shaped out the one word:—

"Murdered."

II.

It was the most mysterious crime that had been committed in Rome since the famous murder in the Coliseum about seven years before. The whole city rang with it. Even the wretched little local newspapers, the *Giornale di Roma*, the *Diario Romano*, and the *Vero Amico del Popolo*, made space, amid the more pressing claims of Church festivals, provincial miracles, and the reporting of homilies, to detail some few scanty particulars of the "*tragedia deplorabile*" in the Palazzo Bardello. Each, too, hinted its own solution of the enigma. The *Diario* inclined to the suicidal point of view; the *Giornale*, more politically wise than its contemporaries, pointed a significant finger towards Sardinia; the *Vero Amico*, under cover of a cloud of fine phrases, insinuated a suspicion of Hugh Girdlestone himself. At every table d'hôte and every artist's club, at the public reading-rooms, in the studios, in the cafés, and at every evening party throughout Rome, it was the universal topic.

In the meanwhile such feeble efforts as it is in the nature of a Pontifical Government to make were put forward for the discovery of the murderer. A post-mortem examination was appointed; official consultations were held; official depositions were drawn up; pompous gendarmes clanked perpetually up and down the staircase and courtyard of the Palazzo Bardello; and every one about the place who could possibly be supposed to have anything to say upon the subject was summoned to give evidence. But in vain. Days went by, weeks went by, and the mystery remained impenetrable as ever. Passing shadows of suspicion fell here and there—on Margherita, on a Corsican courier in the service of the American family, on Hugh Girdlestone himself; but

they rested scarcely at all, and vanished away as a breath from a surface of polished steel.

In the meanwhile, Ethel Girdlestone was laid to rest in a quiet little Roman Catholic cemetery beyond the walls—a lonely, picturesque spot, overlooking the valley of the Tiber and the mountains about Fidenæ. A plain marble cross and a wreath of immortelles marked the place of her grave. For a week or two the freshly-turned mould looked drear and desolate under the spring sunshine; but the grass soon sprang up again, and the wild crocuses struck root and blossomed over it, and by that time Rome had found some fresh subject for gossip, and the fate of Ethel Girdlestone was well nigh forgotten.

There was one, however, who forgot nothing—who, the first torpor of despair once past, lived only to remember and to avenge. He offered an enormous reward for the apprehension of the unknown murderer. He papered Rome with placards. He gave himself up, body and brain, to the task of discovery, and felt that for this, and this only, he could continue to bear the burthen of life. As the chances of success seemed to grow daily more and more uncertain, his purpose but became the more assured. He would have justice; meaning by justice, blood for blood, a life for a life. And this at all costs, at all risks, at all sacrifices. He took a solemn oath to devote, if need be, all the best years of his life, all the vigour of his mind, and all the strength of his manhood, to this one desperate end. For it he was ready to endure any privation, or to incur any personal danger. For it, could his purpose have been thereby assured, he would have gladly died at any hour of the day or night. As it was, he trained himself to the work with a patience that was never wearied. He studied to acquire the dialects, and to familiarise himself with the habits, of the lowest quarters of Rome. He frequented the small wine-shops of the Trastevere and the Rioni St. Angelo. He mastered the intricacies of the Ghetto. He haunted the street fountains, the puppet-shows, and the quays of Ripa Grande. Wherever, in short, the Roman people were to be found *in fra di loro*, whether gossiping, gaming, quarrelling, or holiday-making, there Hugh Girdlestone made his way, mingled with them, listened, observed, and waited like a trapper for his prey. It was a task of untold peril and difficulty, made all the more perilous and difficult by the fact of his being a foreigner. Fluent Italian as he was, it was still not possible that he should perfectly master all the slang of the Rioni, play at *morra* and *zecchinetta* as one to the manner born, or be at all times equal to the part which he had undertaken. He was liable at any moment to betray himself, and to be poignarded for a spy. He knew each time that he ventured into certain quarters of the city that his body might be floating down towards Ostia before daybreak, or that he might quite probably disappear from that moment and never be seen or heard of more. Yet, strong in his purpose and reckless of his life, he went, and came, and went again, penetrating into haunts where the police dared not set foot, and assuming in these excursions the dress and dialect of a Roman "rough" of the lowest order.

Thus disguised, and armed with a deadly patience that knew neither weariness nor discouragement, Hugh Girdlestone pursued his quest. How, despite

every precaution, he contrived to escape detection was matter for daily wonder, even to himself. He owed his safety, however, in great measure to a sullen manner and a silent tongue—perhaps in some degree to his southern complexion; to his black beard and swarthy skin, and the lowering fire in his eyes.

Thus the spring passed away, the summer heats came on, and the wealthier quarters of Rome were, as usual, emptied of their inhabitants. The foreign visitors went first; then the Italian nobility; and then all those among the professional and commercial classes who could afford the healthful luxury of *villeggiatura*. Meanwhile, Hugh Girdlestone was the only remaining lodger in the Palazzo Bardello. Day by day he lingered on in the deserted city, wandering through the burning streets and piazzas, and down by the river-side, where the very air was heavy with malaria. Night after night he perilled life and limb in the wine-shops of the Trastevere; and still in vain. Still the murderer remained undiscovered and the murdered unavenged; still no clue, nor vestige of a clue, turned up. The police, having grown more and more languid in the work of investigation, ceased at last from further efforts. The placards became defaced, or pasted over by fresh ones. By-and-by the whole story faded from people's memories; and, save by one who, sleeping or waking, knew no other thought, the famous "*tragedia deplorabile*" was quite forgotten.

Thus the glowing summer and sultry autumn dragged slowly by. The popular festivals on Monte Testaccio were celebrated and over; the harvest was gathered in; the virulence of the malaria abated; the artists flocked back to their studios, the middle-class Romans to their homes, and the nobles to their palaces. Then the Pope returned from Castel Gondolfo, and the annual tide of English and American visitors set in. By the first Sunday in Advent, Rome was already tolerably well filled; and on the evening of that same Sunday an event took place which threw the whole city into confusion, and caused a clamour of dismay even louder than that which followed the murder of Ethel Girdlestone ten months before. •

III.

A KNOT of loungers stood, talking eagerly, round the stove in Piale's reading-room. It was on the Monday morning following the first Sunday in Advent, and still quite early. None were reading, or attempting to read. The newspapers lay unopened on the tables. Even the last *Times* contained nothing so exciting as the topic then under discussion.

"It is to be hoped and expected that the Government will bestir itself in earnest this time," said a bald-headed Englishman, standing with his back to the stove.

"Hope is one thing, my dear sir, and expectation is another," replied his nearest neighbour. "When you have lived in Rome as long as myself, you will cease to expect anything but indifference from the bureaucracy of the Papal States."

"But a crime of this enormity . . ."

"Is more easily hushed up than investigated, especially when the sufferers are in a humble station of life, and cannot offer a large reward to the police."

"Mr. Somerville puts the question quite fairly," observed another gentle-

man. "There is nothing like public spirit to be found throughout the length and breadth of his Holiness's dominions."

"Nor justice either, it would seem, unless one can pay for it handsomely," added another.

"Nay, your long purse is not always your short cut to justice, even in Rome," said Mr. Somerville. "There was that case of the young bride who was murdered last winter in the Palazzo Bardello. Her husband offered an immense reward—a thousand guineas English, I believe—and yet the mystery was never cleared up."

"Ay, that Palazzo Bardello murder was a tragic affair," said the bald-headed Englishman; "more tragic, on the whole, than . . ."

A sudden change of expression swept over his face, and he broke off in the midst of his sentence.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "I feel as if I were on the brink of a discovery."

"Plunge away, then, my dear fellow," laughed Somerville. "What is it?"

"Well, then—what if both these murders had been committed by the same hand?"

"Most unlikely, I should think," said one.

"Altogether improbable," added another.

"Do you opine that Othello smothered the princes in the Tower?" asked a third.

"Listen to my premises before you laugh at my conclusions," said he of the bald head, obviously nettled by the general incredulity. "Look at the details: they are almost identical. In each case the victim is stabbed to the heart; in each case the wound is almost imperceptibly small. There is no effusion of blood; no robbery is committed; and no trace of the assassin remains. I'd stake my head upon it that these are not purely accidental coincidences!"

"I beg your pardon," said a gentleman, who till now had been standing by a window at the further end of the room with his back to the speakers; "but will you have the goodness to inform me in what part of Rome this—this murder has been committed?"

"Down, I believe, in one of the narrow lanes near the theatre of Marcellus."

"And the victim is a Roman subject?"

"The child of Roman parents."

"A child!"

"A child, sir; a little fellow of only eleven years of age, and the son of a baker named Tommaso."

The stranger took out his note-book.

"Near the theatre of Marcellus," he said, scribbling a rapid entry.

"Just so—a most shocking and mysterious affair!"

"And the name, Tommaso. Many thanks. Good morning."

With this he lifted his hat, strode from the room, and vanished without another word.

"Humph! an abrupt sort of fellow," said the first speaker. "I wonder who he is."

"He looks horribly ill," said another.

"I've met him before," mused Somerville. "I remember the face quite well, but the name has altogether escaped my memory. Good heavens! it was Mr. Girdlestone—the husband of that very lady who was murdered in the Palazzo Bardello!"

In the meanwhile Hugh Girdlestone was swinging along at his tremendous pace towards that quarter where the murder had been perpetrated. He found the house without difficulty, at the end of a narrow Vicolo about half-way between the Portico of Octavia and the Theatre of Marcellus. There was a crowd before the door, and a dismounted dragoon pacing up and down with his sabre under his arm. Over the shop window was suspended a board, on which were inscribed in faded red letters, the words "*ANTICO FORNO*;" and at this window, where still lay unsold some three or four stale rolls of Saturday's baking, an old woman every now and then made her appearance, and addressed wild lamentation to the bystanders.

"Alas! alas!" she cried, tossing her arms aloft like a withered Cassandra. "He was the light of our eyes! He was our darling, our sunshine, our pride! He was as good as an angel. He never told a lie in his life. Everybody loved him! At this hour yesterday his laugh made music in the house, and our hearts leaped for joy to hear it. We shall never hear that voice again—never, never more, till we hear it in heaven! He is dead. He is dead, and the blessed Virgin has him in her care. But his murderer lives. Oh *Dio*, hear it! Hear it, oh blessed mother of God! Hear it, thou blessed Saint Stefano! Overtake him with your vengeance! Let his tongue wither, and his eyes melt away in blood! Let his hands and feet rot upon his body! Let his flesh drop piecemeal from his bones! Let him die unconfessed and unabsolved, and give him over to the everlasting fire!"

"No stranger is allowed to pass, Signore," said the dragoon, interposing his person between the Englishman and the door.

But Hugh Girdlestone had only to open his pocket-book and show a certain slip of paper signed by the chief of police. It was a magical document, and admitted him to all kinds of forbidden places. He went in. In the outer room, or shop, he found some eight or ten persons assembled, apparently relatives and friends of the family; in a darkened room beyond, the body of a young child laid out upon a narrow pallet, strewn with immortelles and set round with lighted candles. The father, a sickly-looking man, with eyes red and swollen from weeping, was sitting upon a low stool, in a farther corner of the room, his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin upon his hands, smoking drearily. The mother lay crouched on the floor beside the bed, in a stupor of misery.

Hugh Girdlestone apologised for his intrusion with a word or two of explanation and sympathy. The woman never stirred. The man took his pipe from his mouth, rose respectfully, and replied to such questions as his visitor thought fit to put to him.

The child's name, he said, was Stefano—Stefanino, they used to call him. He was their only child, and would have been eleven years of age in the

course of a few more days. He was a particularly good boy, and as clever as he was good. He was a great favourite with the Padre Lorenzo—the famous Padre Lorenzo of whom the Signore had doubtless heard. This Padre Lorenzo had taken an especial affection for the little Stefanino, and had himself prepared the boy for his first communion. And he took it only yesterday morning—took it at the church of Il Gesù, at the hands of Monsignore di Montalto. It was a long ceremony. There were six hundred children present, and their Stefanino was among the last who went up. When it was over they came home and dined, and after dinner they went for a walk on the Monte Pincio. Coming back they hired a vettura, for the child was very tired; and as soon as they reached home his mother gave him a cup of soup and a piece of bread, and put him to bed. This was about half-past six o'clock. A little later in the evening—perhaps about a quarter past seven—he and his wife and his wife's mother went over to see a neighbour in the Via Fiumara close by. They left the child asleep. They had often left him so before, especially on Sunday evenings, and no harm had come of it. The wife of the shoemaker who occupied the first floor had promised to listen if he should wake or call for anything; and she was a good soul, and had children of her own. *Ebbene*, they stayed out somewhat late—later than usual, for the neighbour in the Via Fiumara had her married daughter spending the evening with her, and they stayed gossiping till past ten o'clock. Then they came home. The shoemaker and his family were gone to bed; but the house-door was left, as usual, on the latch, and the matches and candle were in their accustomed corner in the passage. So they lit the candle, and fastened the door, and stole in very softly; for little Stefanino was a light sleeper, and apt to lie awake for hours if accidentally roused. However, this time, although the grandmother stumbled over the *scaldino* on first going into the room, he never turned or stirred. He slept in a little crib beside their own bed, and after a few minutes they went to look at him. He was very pale; but then he had gone through a day of great fatigue and excitement, and was unusually tired. They never dreamed, at first sight, that all was not well with him. It was his mother who discovered it. She first saw that no breath parted his dear lips—she first touched his cheek, and found it cold!

When he reached this point in his narrative, the poor baker fairly broke down, and covered his face with his hands.

"*Eccolo*, Signore," he sobbed. "He was our only little one!"

"He is with God," said Hugh Girdlestone.

He could think of nothing else to say. He was not a religious man. He was, on the contrary, a worldly, a careless, perhaps even a somewhat hard man; and he had no words of ready comfort and sympathy at command. But he was moved, and his emotion showed itself in his voice.

"Alas! God did not want him so much as we wanted him," was the naïve reply.

The mother, who till now had lain huddled on the floor, apparently unconscious of all that was going forward, here suddenly lifted up her head.

"The good God and our blessed Lady had him always," she said,

hoarsely. "He was in their hands from the hour when I brought him into the world, and he is not more theirs in heaven than he was theirs on earth. But they did not call him from us. It is not God but man who has bereaved us, and left us desolate. Behold!"

And with this she rose to her feet, turned down the sheet, and uncovered the wound—just such a tiny puncture, with just such a ghastly halo spreading round it, as Hugh Girdlestone had awful cause to remember.

He could not bear to look upon it. He shuddered, and turned his face aside.

"Is there—is there any one whom you suspect?" he faltered.

"No one."

"Have you an enemy?"

The baker shook his head.

"I think not," he replied. "I am at peace with all my neighbours."

"Was no one seen to enter the house in your absence?"

"No one, Signore."

"Did the shoemaker's wife hear no sound?"

"None whatever."

"And you have been robbed of nothing?"

"Not to the value of a *quattrino*."

The Englishman's heart sank within him. He felt profoundly discouraged. The double mystery seemed doubly impenetrable, and his double task doubly hopeless. He turned again to the little bed, and took one long, last look at the waxen figure with its folded hands and funereal chaplets.

"What is this?" he asked, pointing to a white silk scarf fringed with gold which lay folded across the feet of the corpse.

The mother snatched it up, and covered it with passionate kisses.

"It is the scarf he wore yesterday when he went up to take his first communion," she replied. "The Padre Lorenzo gave it to him. Alas! alas! how beautiful he looked, dressed in all his best, with new buckles in his shoes and this scarf tied over one shoulder! The little angels painted over the altar did not look more beautiful!"

"The Padre Lorenzo!" repeated Hugh Girdlestone. "He taught the child, you say, and loved him. Does he know this?"

"Yes, he knows it."

It was the man who replied. The woman had sunk down again upon the floor, and hidden her face.

"Has he been to see you since?"

"He sent a priest this morning to pray for the repose of our little one's soul."

"Humph!"

Tommaseo's quick Italian ear detected the shade of disapproval in his visitor's voice.

"The Padre Lorenzo is a saint," he said, eagerly. "All Rome flocks to hear him preach."

"Where is he to be found, *amico*?"

"At the convent of the *Gésuiti* close by."

"So!—a Jesuit?"

"A Jesuit, Signore; so eloquent, so learned, so holy, and yet so young—so young! A holier man does not live. Though his body still walks upon earth, his soul already lives in heaven."

"I should like to see him," mused the Englishman. "He might suggest something—these Jesuits are keen and far-sighted; at all events, it is worth the effort. I will go round to the *Gésuiti*, *amico*, to hear if your good padre can help us."

"Our blessed Lady and all the saints reward you, dear Signore!" exclaimed the poor father, humbly attempting to kiss the hand which Hugh Girdlestone extended to him at parting.

But the Englishman snatched it hastily away.

"Nay, nay," he said, roughly. "I have my own motive—my own wrong. No thanks—no thanks!"

And with a quick gesture half deprecation, half farewell, he was gone.

IV.

VAST, sombre, dimly lighted, splendid with precious marbles and rich in famous altar-pieces, the church of Il Gesù wore that day an aspect of even gloomier grandeur than usual. Before the chapel of Saint Ignazio, a considerable crowd was assembled. All were listening devoutly. The dropping of a pin might have been heard among them. There had been no service. There was no music. No perfume of incense lingered on the air. It was simply a week-day discourse that was in process of delivery, and the preacher was Padre Lorenzo.

As Hugh Girdlestone went up the steps and lifted the heavy leathern portière, he suddenly remembered how, on that other fatal morning of the thirteenth of February last, he had paused upon those very steps, listening to the chanting and half-disposed to enter. Why had he not followed that impulse? He could not tell. Why need the coincidence startle him now? He could not tell that, either. It was but a coincidence, commonplace and natural enough—and yet it troubled him.

He went in.

The chapel was small and held but few seats, and the crowd spread far out into the body of the church, so that the new comer had to take up his position on the outskirts of the congregation. From this place he could hear, but not see the preacher. Finding it impossible, however, to work his way nearer without disturbing others, he contented himself with listening.

The voice of the preacher was low and clear, and sounded like the voice of a young man; but it rose every now and then to a higher key, and that higher key jarred somewhat harshly upon the ear. The subject of his discourse was death. He held it up to his hearers from every point of view—as a terror, as a reward, as a punishment; as a hope beside which all other hopes were but as the shadows of shadows. He compared the last moments of the just man with those of the sinner. He showed under what circumstances death was robbed of its sting and the grave of its victory. To the soldier falling on the

field, to the martyr consuming at the stake, death was glory; to the sick and the heartbroken it was peace; to the philosopher, infinite knowledge; to the poor, infinite wealth; to all faithful Christians, joy everlasting. Happy, he said, were they who died young, for they had not lived to accumulate the full burden of human sin; happier still they who died penitent, since for them was reserved the special mercy of Heaven.

"But what," he said—and here his voice rose to a strange pitch of tremulous exaltation—"but what shall we say to this event which is to-day on every man's tongue? What shall we say to the death of this little child—this little child who but yesterday partook of his first communion in this very church, and whose fate is even now moving all hearts to indignation and pity? Was ever pity so mistaken? Was ever death so happily timed? In the first bloom of his innocence, in the very moment of his solemn reception into the bosom of our holy Church, sinless, consecrated, absolved, he passed, pure as an angel, into the presence of his Maker. Had he lived but one day longer, he had been less pure. Had he lived to his full term of years, who shall say with what crimes his soul might not have been blackened? He might have lived to become a heretic, an atheist, a blasphemer. He might have died with all his sins upon his head, an outcast upon earth, and an outcast from heaven! Who then shall dare to pity him? Which among us shall not envy him? Has he not gone from earth to heaven, clothed in a wedding garment, like a guest to the banquet of the saints? Has he not gone with the chaplet on his brow, the ring upon his finger, the perfume of the incense yet clinging to his hair, the wine of Christ yet fresh upon his lips? Silence, then, oh ye of little faith! Why grieve that another voice is given to the heavenly choir? Why lament that another martyr is added to the noble army of the Lord? Let us rejoice rather than weep. Let our requiems be changed for songs of praise and thanksgiving. Shall we pity him that he is beyond the reach of sorrow? Shall we shudder at the fate that has given him to Paradise? Shall we even dare to curse the hand that sent him thither? May not that very hand have been consecrated to the task?—have been guided by the finger of God?—have been inspired by a strength a wisdom no murderer; but a priest a priest of the tabernacle it was the voice of God a voice from Heaven saying"

He faltered—became inarticulate—stopped.

A sudden confusion fell upon the congregation; a sudden murmur rose and filled the church. In an instant all were moving, speaking, gesticulating; in an instant Hugh Girdlestone was pushing his way towards the chapel.

And the preacher? Tall, slender, wild-eyed, looking utterly helpless and bewildered, he stood before his hearers, unable, as it seemed, to speak or think. He looked quite young—about twenty-eight, or it might be thirty, years of age—but worn and haggard, as one that had prayed and fasted overmuch. Seeing Hugh Girdlestone push through the crowd and stand suddenly before him, he shrank back like a hunted creature, and began trembling violently.

"At last! at last!" gasped the Englishman. "Confess it, murderer; confess it, before I strike you dead with my own hands!"

The priest put his hand to his head. His lips moved, but no utterance came.

"Do you know who I am?" continued Hugh, in a deep, hoarse voice that trembled with hatred. "Do you know who I am? I am the husband of Ethel Girdlestone—that Ethel Girdlestone who used to come to this very church to confess to you—to you, who slew her in her bed as you yesterday slew a little child that loved you. Devil! I remember you now. Why did I not suspect you sooner?"

"Hush!" said a grave voice in his ear. "Does the Signore forget in whose house we are?"

It was another priest of the order, who had just come upon the scene.

"I forget nothing," replied the Englishman. "Bear witness, all present, that I charge this man with murder!"

The new comer turned to the congregation.

"And bear witness, all present," he added solemnly, with uplifted hand, "that the Padre Lorenzo is responsible for neither his words nor his deeds. He is mad."

* * * * *

And so it was. Young, eloquent, learned, an impassioned orator, and one of the most brilliant ornaments of his order, the Padre Lorenzo had for more than two years betrayed occasional symptoms of insanity. He had committed some few extravagancies from time to time, and had broken down once or twice in a discourse; but it had never been supposed that his eccentricity had danger in it. Of the murder of Ethel Girdlestone no one had ever for one moment dreamed that he was guilty. With the instinctive cunning of madness he had kept his first secret well. But he could not keep the second. Having ventured on the perilous subject, he betrayed himself. From that hour he became a raving maniac, and disappeared for ever from the world. By what motive his distempered brain had been moved to the commission of these crimes, and where he had obtained the long slender dagger, scarcely thicker than a needle, with which they were perpetrated, were secrets never discovered; but it was thought by some of those who knew him best that he had slain the child to save his soul from possible sin and send him straight to heaven. As for Ethel Girdlestone, it was probable that he had murdered her from some similar motive—most likely to preserve her against the danger of perversion by a heretic husband.

Hugh Girdlestone lives, famous and prosperous, learned in the law, and not unlikely, it is said, to attain the woolsack by-and-by. But he lives a solitary life, and the gloom that fell upon his youth overshadows all his prosperity. He will never marry again.

AMELIA B. EDWARDS.



GRIFFITH GAUNT

BY CHARLES READE.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE bill was paid; the black horse saddled and brought round to the door. Mr. and Mrs. Vint stood bareheaded to honour the parting guest; and the latter offered him the stirrup cup.

Griffith looked round for Mercy: she was nowhere to be seen.

Then he said, piteously, to Mrs. Vint, "What, not even bid me good-bye?"

Mrs. Vint replied, in a very low voice, that there was no disrespect intended. "The truth is, sir, she could not trust herself to see you go; but she bade me give you a message. Says she, 'Mother, tell him I pray God to bless him, go where he will.'"

Something rose in Griffith's throat. "Oh, Dame!" said he, "if she only knew the truth, she would think better of me than she does. God bless her!"

And he rode sorrowfully away, alone in the world once more.

At the first turn in the road, he wheeled his horse, and took a last lingering look.

There was nothing vulgar, nor inn-like, in the "Packhorse." It stood fifty yards from the road on a little rural green, and was picturesque itself. The front was entirely clad with large-leaved ivy. Shutters there were none: the windows, with their diamond panes, were lustrous squares, set like great eyes in the green ivy. It looked a pretty, peaceful retreat, and in it Griffith had found peace, and a dove-like friend.

He sighed, and rode away from the sight; not raging and convulsed, as when he rode from Hernshaw Castle, but somewhat sick at heart, and very heavy.

He paced so slowly that it took him a quarter of an hour to reach the "Woodman," a wayside inn, not two miles distant. As he went by, a farmer hailed him from the porch, and insisted on drinking with him; for he was very popular in the neighbourhood. Whilst they were thus employed, who should come out but Paul Carrick, booted and spurred; and flushed in the face, and rather the worse for liquor imbibed on the spot.

"So you are going, are ye?" said he. "A good job too." Then, turning to the other, "Master Gutteridge, never you save a man's life if you can any-ways help it. I saved this one's: and what does he do but turn round and poison my sweetheart against me?"

"How can you say so?" remonstrated Griffith. "I never belied you. Your name scarce ever passed my lips."

"Don't tell me," said Carrick. "However, she has come to her senses, and given your worship the sack. Ride you into Cumberland, and I to the 'Packhorse,' and take my own again."

With this he unhooked his nag from the wall, and clattered off to the "Packhorse."

Griffith sat a moment stupified, and then his face was convulsed by his ruling passion. He wheeled his horse, gave him the spur, and galloped after Carrick.

He soon came up with him, and yelled in his ear, "I'll teach you to spit your wormwood in my cup of sorrow."

Carrick shook his fist defiantly, and spurred his horse in turn.

It was an exciting race, and a novel one; but soon decided. The great black hunter went ahead, and still improved his advantage. Carrick, purple with rage, was full a quarter of a mile behind, when Griffith dashed furiously into the stable of the "Packhorse," and, leaving Black Dick panting and covered with foam, ran in search of Mercy.

The girl told him she was in the dairy: he looked in at the window, and there she was with her mother. With instinctive sense and fortitude she had fled to work. She was trying to churn; but it would not do: she had laid her shapely arm on the churn, and her head on it, and was crying.

Mrs. Vint was praising Carrick, and offering homely consolation.

"Ah, mother," sighed Mercy, "I could have made him happy. He does not know that; and he has turned his back on content. What will become of him?"

Griffith heard no more: he went round to the front door, and rushed in.

"Take your own way, Dame," said he, in great agitation. "Put up the banns when you like. Sweetheart, wilt wed with me? I'll make thee the best husband I can."

Mercy screamed faintly, and lifted up her hands; then she blushed and trembled to her very finger ends; but it ended in smiles of joy and her brow upon his shoulder.

In which attitude, with Mrs. Vint patting him approvingly on the back, they were surprised by Paul Carrick. He came to the door, and there stood aghast.

The young man stared ruefully at the picture, and then said, very drily, "I'm too late, methinks."

"That you be, Paul," said Mrs. Vint, cheerfully. "She is meat for your master."

"Don't—you—never—come to me—to save your life—no more," blubbered Paul, breaking down all of a sudden.

He then retired, little heeded, and came no more to the "Packhorse" for several days.

CHAPTER XXIX.

It is desirable that improper marriages should never be solemnized: and the Christian Church saw this, many hundred years ago, and ordained that, before a marriage, the banns should be cried in a church three Sundays, and any person there present might forbid the union of the parties, and allege the just impediment.

This precaution was feeble, but not wholly inadequate—in the middle



GRIFFITH GAUNT AND PAUL CARRICK.

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ages; for we know by good evidence that the priest was often interrupted and the banns forbidden.

But in modern days the banns are never forbidden: in other words, the precautionary measure that has come down to us from the thirteenth century is out of date and useless. It rests, indeed, on an estimate of publicity, that has become childish, and almost asinine. If persons about to marry were compelled to inscribe their names and descriptions in a Matrimonial Weekly Gazette, and a copy of this were placed on a desk in ten thousand churches, perhaps we might stop one lady per annum from marrying her husband's brother, and one gentleman from wedding his neighbour's wife. But the crying of banns in a single parish church is a waste of the people's time and the parson's breath.

And so it proved in Griffith Gaunt's case. The Rev. William Wentworth published, in the usual recitative, the banns of marriage between Thomas Leicester, of the parish of Marylebone in London, and Mercy Vint, spinster, of *this* parish: and creation, present ex hypothesi mediævale, but absent in fact, assented, by silence, to the union.

So Thomas Leicester wedded Mercy Vint, and took her home to the "Packhorse."

It would be well if those who stifle their consciences, and commit crimes, would set up a sort of medico-moral diary, and record their symptoms minutely day by day. Such records might help to clear away some vague, conventional notions.

To tell the truth, our hero, and now malefactor (the combination is of high antiquity), enjoyed, for several months, the peace of mind that belongs of right to innocence; and his days passed in a state of smooth complacency. Mercy was a good, wise, and tender wife; she naturally looked up to him after marriage more than she did before: she studied his happiness, as she had never studied her own: she mastered his character, admired his good qualities, discerned his weaknesses, but did not view them as defects; only as little traits to be watched, lest she should give pain to "her master," as she called him.

Affection, in her, took a more obsequious form than it could ever assume in Kate Peyton. And yet she had great influence, and softly governed "her master" for his good. She would come into the room and take away the bottle, if he was committing excess; but she had a way of doing it, so like a good but resolute mother, and so unlike a termagant, that he never resisted. Upon the whole, she nursed his mind as, in earlier days, she had nursed his body.

And then she made him so comfortable; she observed him minutely to that end. As is the eye of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so Mercy Leicester's dove-like eye was ever watching "her master's" face, to learn the minutest features of his mind.

One evening he came in tired, and there was a black fire in the parlour. His countenance fell the sixteenth of an inch. You and I, sir, should never

have noticed it. But Mercy did, and, ever after, there was a clear fire when he came in.

She noted, too, that he loved to play the Viol da Gambo; but disliked the trouble of tuning it. So then she tuned it for him.

When he came home at night, early or late, he was sure to find a dry pair of shoes on the rug, his six-stringed viol tuned to a hair, a bright fire, and a brighter wife smiling and radiant at his coming, and always neat: for, said she, "Shall I don my bravery for strangers, and not for my Thomas, that is the best of company?"

They used to go to church, and come back together, hand in hand like lovers: for the arm was rarely given in those days. And Griffith said to himself every Sunday, "What a comfort to have a Protestant wife."

But one day he was off his guard, and called her "Kate, my dear."

"Who is Kate?" said she, softly; but with a degree of trouble and intelligence that made him tremble.

"No matter," said he, all in a flutter: then, solemnly, "Whoever she was, she is dead; dead."

"Ah!" said Mercy, very tenderly and solemnly, and under her breath, "You loved her; yet she must die." She paused; then, in a tone so exquisite I can only call it an angel's whisper, "Poor Kate!"

Griffith groaned aloud. "For God's sake never mention that name to me again. Let me forget she ever lived. She was not the true friend to me that you have been."

Mercy replied, softly, "Say not so, Thomas. You loved her well. Her death had all but cost me thine. Ah, well! we cannot all be the first. I am not very jealous, for my part; and I thank God for't. Thou art a dear good husband to me, and that is enow."

Paul Carrick, unable to break off his habits, came to the "Packhorse" now and then; but Mercy protected her husband's heart from pain. She was kind, and even pitiful; but so discreet and resolute, and contrived to draw the line so clearly between her husband and her old sweetheart, that Griffith's foible could not burn him, for want of fuel.

And so passed several months, and the man's heart was at peace. He could not love Mercy passionately as he had loved Kate; but he was full of real regard and esteem for her: it was one of those gentle, clinging attachments that outlast grand passions, and survive till death; a tender, pure affection; though built upon a crime.

They had been married, and lived in sweet content, about three quarters of a year—when trouble came; but in a vulgar form. A murrain carried off several of Harry Vint's cattle; and it then came out that he had purchased six of them on credit, and had been induced to set his hand to bills of exchange for them. His rent was also behind, and, in fact, his affairs were in a desperate condition.

He hid it as long as he could from them all; but, at last, being served with a process for debt, and threatened with a distress, and an execution, he called a family council and exposed the real state of things.

Mrs. Vint rated him soundly for keeping all this secret so long.

He whom they called Thomas Leicester remonstrated with him. "Had you told me in time," said he, "I had not paid forfeit for 'The Vine,' but settled there, and given you a home."

Mercy said never a word but "Poor Father!"

As the peril drew nearer, the conversations became more animated and agitated, and soon the old people took to complaining of Thomas Leicester to his wife.

"Thou hast married a gentleman; and he hath not the heart to lift a hand to save thy folk from ruin."

"Say not so," pleaded Mercy: "to be sure he hath the heart, but not the means. 'Twas but yestreen he bade me sell his jewels for you. But, mother, I think they belonged to some one he loved—and she died. So, poor thing, how could I? Then, if you love me, blame me, and not him."

"Jewels, quotha! will they stop such a gap as ours?" was the contemptuous reply.

From complaining of him behind his back, the old people soon came to launching innuendoes obliquely at him. Here is one specimen out of a dozen.

"Wife, if our Mercy had wedded one of her own sort, mayhap he'd have helped us a bit."

"Ay, poor soul; and she so near her time: if the bailiffs come down on us next month, 'tis my belief we shall lose her, as well as house and home."

The false Thomas Leicester let them run on, in dogged silence; but every word was a stab.

And one day, when he had been baited sore with hints, he turned round on them fiercely, and said, "Did I get you into this mess? It's all your own doing. Learn to see your own faults, and not be so hard on one that has been the best servant you ever had, gentleman or not."

Men can resist the remonstrances that wound them, and so irritate them, better than they can those gentle appeals that rouse no anger, but soften the whole heart. The old people stung him; but Mercy, without design, took a surer way. She never said a word; but sometimes, when the discussions were at their height, she turned her dove-like eyes on him, with a look so loving, so humbly inquiring, so timidly imploring, that his heart melted within him.

Ah, that is a true touch of nature, and genuine observation of the sexes, in the old song—

"My feyther urged me sair;
My mither didna speak;
But she looked me in the face,
Till my hairt was like to break."

These silent, womanly, imploring looks of patient Mercy, were mightier than argument, or invective.

The man knew all along where to get money, and how to get it. He

had only to go to Hernshaw Castle. But his very soul shuddered at the idea. However, for Mercy's sake, he took the first step: he compelled himself to look the thing in the face, and discuss it with himself. A few months ago he could not have done even this, he loved his lawful wife too much; hated her too much. But now, Mercy, and Time, had blunted both those passions; and he could ask himself whether he could not encounter Kate and her priest without any very violent emotion.

When they first set up house together, he had spent his whole fortune, a sum of two thousand pounds, on repairing and embellishing Hernshaw Castle and grounds. Since she had driven him out of the house, he had a clear right to have back the money; and he now resolved he would have it; but what he wanted was to get it without going to the place in person.

And now Mercy's figure, as well as her imploring looks, moved him greatly. She was in that condition which appeals to a man's humanity, and masculine pity, as well as to his affection. To use the homely words of Scripture, she was great with child: and, in that condition, moved slowly about him, filling his pipe, and laying his slippers, and ministering to all his little comforts; she would make no difference: and when he saw the poor dove move about him so heavily, and rather languidly, yet so zealously and tenderly, the man's very bowels yearned over her, and he felt as if he could die to do her a service.

So, one day, when she was standing by him, bending over his little round table, and filling his pipe with her neat hand, he took her by the other hand and drew her gently on his knee, her burden and all.

"Child!" said he, "do not thou fret. I know how to get money; and I'll do't, for thy sake."

"I know that," said she, softly; "can I not read thy face by this time?" and so laid her cheek to his. "But, Thomas, for my sake, get it honestly; or not at all," said she, still filling his pipe, with her cheek to his.

"I'll but take back my own," said he; "fear nought."

But, after thus positively pledging himself to Mercy, he became thoughtful and rather fretful; for he was still most averse to go to Hernshaw, and yet could hit upon no other way; since to employ an agent would be to let out that he had committed bigamy; and so risk his own neck, and break Mercy's heart.

After all his scale was turned by his foible.

Mrs. Vint had been weak enough to confide her trouble to a friend: it was all over the parish in three days.

Well, one day, in the kitchen of the inn, Paul Carrick, having drunk two pints of good ale, said to Vint, "Landlord, you ought to have married her to me. I've got two hundred pounds laid by. I'd have pulled you out of the mire, and welcome."

"Would you, though, Paul?" said Harry Vint; "then, by G——, I wish I had."

Now Carrick bawled that out, and Griffith, who was at the door, heard it.

He walked into the kitchen, ghastly pale, and spoke to Harry Vint first.

"I take your inn, your farm, and your debts, on me," said he; "not one without t'other."

"Spoke like a man!" cried the landlord, joyfully: "and so be it—before these witnesses."

Griffith turned on Carrick: "This house is mine. Get out on't, ye *jealous*, mischief-making cur." And he took him by the collar and dragged him furiously out of the place, and sent him whirling into the middle of the road; then ran back for his hat and flung it out after him.

This done, he sat down boiling, and his eyes roved fiercely round the room in search of some other antagonist. But his strength was so great, and his face so altered with this sudden spasm of reviving jealousy, that nobody cared to provoke him farther.

After a while, however, Harry Vint muttered, drily, "There goes one good customer."

Griffith took him up sternly: "If your debts are to be mine, your trade shall be mine too, that you had not the head to conduct."

"So be it, son-in-law," said the old man; "only you go so fast: you do take possession afore you pays the fee."

Griffith winced. "That shall be the last of your taunts, old man." He turned to the ostler, "Bill, give Black Dick his oats at sunrise: and in ten days at farthest I'll pay every shilling this house and farm do owe. Now, Master White, you'll put in hand a new sign-board for this inn; a fresh 'Packhorse,' and paint him jet black, with one white hoof (instead of chocolate), in honour of my nag Dick; and in place of Harry Vint you'll put in Thomas Leicester. See that is done against I come back, or come *you* here no more."

Soon after this scene he retired to tell Mercy: and, on his departure, the suppressed tongues went like mill-clacks.

Dick came round saddled at peep of day; but Mercy had been up more than an hour, and prepared her man's breakfast. She clung to him at parting, and cried a little; and whispered something in his ear, for nobody else to hear: it was an entreaty that he would not be long gone, lest he should be far from her in the hour of her peril.

Thereupon he promised her, and kissed her tenderly, and bade her be of good heart; and so rode away northwards with dogged resolution.

As soon as he was gone, Mercy's tears flowed without restraint.

Her father set himself to console her. "Thy good man," he said, "is but gone back to the high road for a night or two, to follow his trade of 'stand and deliver.' Fear nought, child; his pistols are well primed; I saw to that myself; and his horse is the fleetest in the county; you'll have him back in three days, and money in both pockets. I warrant you his is a better trade than mine; and he is a fool to change it."

Griffith was two days upon the road, and all that time he was turning over and discussing in his mind how he should conduct the disagreeable but necessary business he had undertaken.

He determined, at last, to make the visit one of business only: no heat, no reproaches. That lovely, hateful woman might continue to dishonour his name, for he had himself abandoned it. He would not deign to receive any money that was hers; but his own two thousand pounds he would have: and two or three hundred on the spot by way of instalment. And, with these hard views, he drew near to Hernshaw; but the nearer he got, the slower he went; for, what at a distance had seemed tolerably easy, began to get more and more difficult, and repulsive. Moreover, his heart, which he thought he had steeled, began now to flutter a little, and somehow to shudder at the approaching interview.

CHAPTER XXX.

CAROLINE RYDER went to the gate of the Grove, and stayed there two hours; but, of course, no Griffith came.

She returned the next night, and the next: and then she gave it up, and awaited an explanation. None came, and she was bitterly disappointed, and indignant.

She began to hate Griffith, and to conceive a certain respect, and even a tepid friendship, for the other woman he had insulted.

Another clue to this change of feeling is to be found in a word she let drop in talking to another servant. "My mistress," said she, "bears it *like a man*."

In fact, Mrs. Gaunt's conduct at this period was truly noble.

She suffered months of torture, months of grief; but the high-spirited creature hid it from the world, and maintained a sad but high composure.

She wore her black, for she said, "How do I know he is alive?" She retrenched her establishment, reduced her expenses two-thirds; and busied herself in works of charity and religion.

Her desolate condition attracted a gentleman who had once loved her, and now esteemed and pitied her profoundly: Sir George Neville.

He was still unmarried, and she was the cause; so far at least as this: she had put him out of conceit with the other ladies at that period when he had serious thoughts of marriage: and the inclination to marry at all had not since returned.

If the Gaunts had settled at Bolton, Sir George would have been their near neighbour; but Neville's Court was nine miles from Hernshaw Castle: and, when they met, which was not very often, Mrs. Gaunt was on her guard to give Griffith no shadow of uneasiness. She was therefore rather more dignified and distant with Sir George, than her own inclination and his merits would have prompted; for he was a superior and very agreeable man.

When it became quite certain that her husband had left her, Sir George rode up to Hernshaw Castle, and called upon her.

She begged to be excused from seeing him.

Now, Sir George was universally courted, and this rather nettled him: however, he soon learned that she received nobody except a few religious friends of her own sex.

Sir George then wrote her a letter that did him credit; it was full of worthy sentiment and good sense. For instance, he said he desired to intrude

his friendly offices and his sympathy upon her, but nothing more. Time had cured him of those warmer feelings which had once ruffled his peace; but Time could not efface his tender esteem for the lady he had loved in his youth, nor his profound respect for her character.

Mrs. Gaunt wept over his gentle letter, and was on the verge of asking herself why she had chosen Griffith instead of this chevalier. She sent him a sweet, yet prudent reply; she did not encourage him to visit her; but said, that, if ever she should bring herself to receive visits from the gentlemen of the county during her husband's absence, he should be the first to know it. She signed herself his unhappy, but deeply grateful, servant and friend.

One day, as she came out of a poor woman's cottage, with a little basket on her arm, which she had emptied in the cottage, she met Sir George Neville full.

He took his hat off, and made her a profound bow. He was then about to ride on, but altered his mind, and dismounted to speak to her.

The interview was constrained at first; but ere long he ventured to tell her she really ought to consult with some old friend and practical man like himself. He would undertake to scour the country, and find her husband, if he was above ground.

"Me go a hunting the man," cried she, turning red; "not if he was my king as well as my husband. He knows where to find *me*; and that is enough."

"Well, but madam, would you not like to learn where he is, and what he is doing?"

"Why, yes, my good, kind friend, I *should* like to know that." And, having pronounced these words with apparent calmness, she burst out crying, and almost ran away from him.

Sir George looked sadly after her; and formed a worthy resolution. He saw there was but one road to her regard. He resolved to hunt her husband for her, without intruding on her, or giving her a voice in the matter. Sir George was a magistrate, and accustomed to organize inquiries; spite of the length of time that had elapsed, he traced Griffith for a considerable distance; pending further inquiries, he sent Mrs. Gaunt word that the truant had not made for the sea, but had gone due south.

Mrs. Gaunt returned him her warm thanks for this scrap of information. So long as Griffith remained in the island there was always a hope he might return to her. The money he had taken would soon be exhausted: and poverty might drive him to her; and she was so far humbled by grief, that she could welcome him even on those terms.

Affliction tempers the proud. Mrs. Gaunt was deeply injured as well as insulted; but, for all that, in her many days and weeks of solitude and sorrow, she took herself to task, and saw her fault. She became more gentle, more considerate of her servants' feelings, more womanly.

For many months she could not enter "the Grove." The spirited woman's very flesh revolted at the sight of the place where she had been insulted and abandoned. But, as she went deeper in religion, she forced herself to go to the gate and look in, and say out loud, "I gave the first

offence," and then she would go in-doors again, quivering with the internal conflict.

Finally, being a Catholic, and therefore attaching more value to self-torture than we do, the poor soul made this very grove her place of penance. Once a week she had the fortitude to drag herself to the very spot where Griffith had denounced her; and there she would kneel and pray for him and for herself. And, certainly, if humility and self-abasement were qualities of the body, here was to be seen their picture; for her way was to set her crucifix up at the foot of a tree; then to bow herself all down, between kneeling and lying; and put her lips meekly to the foot of the crucifix, and so pray long and earnestly.

Now, one day, while she was thus crouching in prayer, a gentleman, booted, and spurred, and splashed, drew near, with hesitating steps. She was so absorbed, she did not hear those steps at all, till they were very near; but then she trembled all over; for her delicate ear recognized a manly tread she had not heard for many a day. She dared not move nor look, for she thought it was a mere sound, sent to her by heaven to comfort her.

But the next moment a well-known mellow voice came like a thunder-clap, it shook her so.

"Forgive me, my good dame, but I desire to know——"

The question went no farther, for Kate Gaunt sprang to her feet, with a loud scream, and stood glaring at Griffith Gaunt, and he at her.

And thus husband and wife met again—met, by some strange caprice of Destiny, on the very spot where they had parted so horribly.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE gaze these two persons bent on one another, may be half imagined; it can never be described.

Griffith spoke first. "In black!" said he, in a whisper.

His voice was low: his face, though pale and grim, had not the terrible aspect he wore at parting.

So she thought he had come back in an amicable spirit; and she flew to him, with a cry of love, and threw her arm round his neck, and panted on his shoulder.

At this reception, and the tremulous contact of one he had loved so dearly, a strange shudder ran through his frame: a shudder that marked his present repugnance, yet indicated her latent power.

He himself felt he had betrayed some weakness; and it was all the worse for her: he caught her wrist and put her from him, not roughly, but with a look of horror. "The day is gone by for that, madam," he gasped. Then, sternly: "Think you I came here to play the credulous husband?"

Mrs. Gaunt drew back in her turn, and faltered out, "What! come back here, and not sorry for what you have done? not the least sorry? Oh, my heart! you have almost broken it."

"Prithee, no more of this," said Griffith, sternly. "You and I are nought to one another now, and for ever. But there, you are but a woman,

and I did not come to quarrel with you." And he fixed his eyes on the ground.

"Thank God for that," faltered Mrs. Gaunt. "Oh, sir, the sight of you—the thought of what you were to me once—till jealousy blinded you. Lend me your arm, if you are a man; my limbs do fail me."

The shock had been too much; a pallor overspread her lovely features, her knees knocked together, and she was tottering like some tender tree cut down, when Griffith, who, with all his faults, was a man, put out his strong arm, and she clung to it, quivering all over, and weeping hysterically.

That little hand, with its little feminine clutch, trembling on his arm, raised a certain male compassion for her piteous condition; and he bestowed a few cold, sad, words of encouragement on her. "Come, come," said he, gently; "I shall not trouble you long. I'm cured of my jealousy. 'Tis gone, along with my love. You and your saintly sinner are safe from me. I am come hither for my own, my two thousand pounds, and for nothing more."

"Ah! you are come back for money, not for me?" she murmured, with forced calmness.

"For money; and not for you, of course," said he, coldly.

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when the proud lady flung his arm from her. "Then money shall you have, and not me; nor ought of me but my contempt."

But she could not carry it off as heretofore. She turned her back haughtily on him; but, at the first step, she burst out crying. "Come, and I'll give you what you are come for," she sobbed. "Ungrateful! heartless! Oh, how little I knew this man!"

She crept away before him, drooping her head, and crying bitterly; and he followed her, hanging his head, and ill at ease; for there was such true passion in her voice, her streaming eyes, and indeed in her whole body, that he was moved, and the part he was playing revolted him. He felt confused and troubled, and asked himself how on earth it was that she, the guilty one, contrived to appear the injured one, and made him, the wronged one, feel almost remorseful.

Mrs. Gaunt took no more notice of him now than if he had been a dog following at her heels. She went into the drawing-room, and sank helplessly on the nearest couch; threw her head wearily back, and shut her eyes. Yet the tears trickled through the closed lids.

Griffith caught up a hand-bell, and rang it vigorously.

Quick light steps were soon heard pattering; and in darted Caroline Ryder, with an anxious face; for of late she had conceived a certain sober regard for her mistress, who had ceased to be her successful rival, and who bore her grief like a man.

At sight of Griffith, Ryder screamed aloud, and stood panting.

Mrs. Gaunt opened her eyes. "Ay, child, he has come home," said she, bitterly; "his body, but not his heart."

She stretched her hand out feebly, and pointed to a bottle of salts that

stood on the table. Ryder ran and put them to her nostrils. Mrs. Gaunt whispered in her ear, "Send a swift horse for Father Francis; tell him, life or death!"

Ryder gave her a very intelligent look, and presently slipped out, and ran into the stable-yard.

At the gate she caught sight of Griffith's horse. What does this quick-witted creature do but send the groom off on that horse, and not on Mrs. Gaunt's.

"Now, Dame," said Griffith, doggedly, "are you better?"

"Ay, I thank you."

"Then listen to me. When you and I set up house together, I had two thousand pounds. I spent it on this house. The house is yours. You told me so, one day, you know."

"Ah, you can remember my faults."

"I remember all, Kate."

"Thank you, at least, for calling me Kate. Well, Griffith, since you abandoned us, I thought, and thought, and thought, of all that might befall you; and I said, 'What will he do for money?' My jewels, that you did me the honour to take, would not last you long, I feared. So I reduced my expenses three-fourths at least, and I put by some money for your need."

Griffith looked amazed. "For my need?" said he.

"For whose else? I'll send for it, and place it in your hands—to-morrow."

"To-morrow? Why not to-day?"

"I have a favour to ask of you first."

"What is that?"

"Justice. If you are fond of money, I too have something I prize: my honour. You have belied and insulted me, sir; but I know you were under a delusion. I mean to remove that delusion, and make you see how little I am to blame: for, alas! I own I was imprudent. But, oh Griffith, as I hope to be saved, it was the imprudence of innocence and over-confidence."

"Mistress," said Griffith, in a stern, yet agitated voice, "be advised, and leave all this: rouse not a man's sleeping wrath. Let bygones be bygones."

Mrs. Gaunt rose, and said, faintly, "So be it. I must go, sir, and give some orders for your entertainment."

"Oh, don't put yourself about for me," said Griffith, "I am not the master of this house."

Mrs. Gaunt's lip trembled, but she was a match for him. "Then are you my guest," said she; "and my credit is concerned in your comfort."

She made him a curtsy, as if he were a stranger, and marched to the door, concealing, with great pride and art, a certain trembling of her knees.

At the door she found Ryder, and bade her follow, much to that lady's disappointment; for she desired a *tête-à-tête* with Griffith, and an explanation.

As soon as the two women were out of Griffith's hearing, the mistress laid her hand on the servant's arm, and, giving way to her feelings, said, all

in a flutter, "Child, if I have been a good mistress to thee, show it now. Help me keep him in the house till Father Francis comes."

"I undertake to do so much," said Ryder, firmly. "Leave it to me, mistress."

Mrs. Gaunt threw her arms round Ryder's neck and kissed her.

It was done so ardently, and by a woman hitherto so dignified and proud, that Ryder was taken by surprise, and almost affected.

As for the service Mrs. Gaunt had asked of her, it suited her own designs.

"Mistress," said she, "be ruled by me; keep out of his way a bit, while I get Miss Rose ready. You understand."

"Ah! I have one true friend in the house," said poor Mrs. Gaunt. She then confided in Ryder, and went away to give her own orders for Griffith's reception.

Ryder found little Rose, dressed her to perfection, and told her her dear papa was come home. She then worked upon the child's mind in that subtle way known to women, so that Rose went downstairs loaded and primed, though no distinct instructions had been given her.

As for Griffith, he walked up and down, uneasy; and wished he had stayed at the "Packhorse." He had not bargained for all these emotions; the peace of mind he had enjoyed for some months seemed trickling away.

"Mercy, my dear," said he, to himself, "'twill be a dear penny to me, I doubt."

Then he went to the window, and looked at the lawn, and sighed. Then he sat down, and thought of the past.

Whilst he sat thus moody, the door opened very softly, and a little cherubic face, with blue eyes and golden hair, peeped in. Griffith started. "Ah!" cried Rose, with a joyful scream: and out flew her little arms, and away she came, half running, half dancing, and was on his knee in a moment, with her arms round his neck.

"Papa! papa!" she cried. "Oh, my dear, dear, dear, darling papa!" And she kissed and patted his cheek again and again.

Her innocent endearments moved him to tears. "My pretty angel!" he sighed: "my lamb!"

"How your heart beats: don't cry, dear papa. Nobody is dead: only we thought you were. I'm so glad you are come home alive. Now we can take off this nasty black: I hate it."

"What, 'tis for me you wear it, pretty one?"

"Ay. Mamma made us. Poor mamma has been so unhappy. And that reminds me: you are a wicked man, papa. But I love you all one for that. It *is* so dull when everybody is good like mamma; and she makes me dreadfully good too; but now you are come back, there will be a little, little, wickedness again, it is to be hoped. Aren't you glad you are not dead, and are come home instead? I am."

"I am glad I have seen thee. Come, take my hand, and let us go look at the old place."

"Ay. But you must wait till I get on my new hat and feather."

"Nay, nay; art pretty enough bareheaded."

"Oh, papa! but I must, for decency. You are company now, you know."

"Dull company, sweetheart, thou'lt find me."

"I don't mean that: I mean, when you were here always, you were only papa; but now you come once in an age, you're company. I won't budge without 'em; so there, now."

"Well, little one, I do submit to thy hat and feather: only be quick; or I shall go forth without thee."

"If you dare," said Rose, impetuously: "for I won't be half a moment."

She ran and extorted from Ryder the new hat and feather, which by rights she was not to have worn until next month.

Griffith and his little girl went all over the well-known premises, he sad and moody, she excited and chattering, and nodding her head down, and cocking her eye up every now and then, to get a glimpse of her feather.

"And don't you go away again, dear papa. It's so dull without you. Nobody comes here. Mamma won't let 'em."

"Nobody except Father Leonard," said Griffith, bitterly.

"Father Leonard? Why, he never comes here. Leonard! That is the beautiful priest that used to pat me on the head, and bid me love and honour my parents. And so I do. Only mamma is always crying, and you keep away: so how can I love and honour you, when I never see you, and they keep telling me you are good for nothing, and dead."

"My young mistress, when did you see Father Leonard last?" said Griffith, gnawing his lip.

"How can I tell? Why, it was miles ago; when I was a mere girl. You know he went away before you did."

"I know nothing of the kind. Tell me the truth now. He has visited here since I went away."

"Nay, papa."

"That is strange. She visits him, then?"

"What, mamma? She seldom stirs out; and never beyond the village. We keep no carriage now. Mamma is turned such a miser. She is afraid you will be poor; so she puts it all by for you. But now you are come, we shall have carriages and things again. Oh, by-the-by, Father Leonard! I heard them say he had left England, so I did."

"When was that?"

"Well, I think that was a little bit after you went away."

"That is strange," said Griffith, thoughtfully.

He led his little girl by the hand, but scarcely listened to her prattle; he was so surprised and puzzled by the information he had elicited from her.

Upon the whole, however, he concluded that his wife and the priest had perhaps been smitten with remorse, and had parted,—when it was too late.

This, and the peace of mind he had found elsewhere, somewhat softened his feelings towards them. "So," thought he, "they were not hardened creatures after all. Poor Kate!"

As these milder feelings gained on him, Rose suddenly uttered a joyful

cry; and, looking up, he saw Mrs. Gaunt coming towards him, and Ryder behind her. Both were in gay colours, which, in fact, was what had so delighted Rose.

They came up, and Mrs. Gaunt seemed a changed woman. She looked young and beautiful, and bent a look of angelic affection on her daughter; and said to Griffith, "Is she not grown? Is she not lovely? Sure you will never desert her again."

"'Twas not her I deserted, but her mother; and she had played me false with her d——d priest," was Griffith's reply.

Mrs. Gaunt drew back with horror. "This, before my girl?" she cried. "GRIFFITH GAUNT, YOU LIE!"

And this time it was the woman who menaced the man. She rose to six feet high, and advanced on him with her great grey eyes flashing flames at him. "Oh, that I were a man," she cried: "this insult should be the last. I'd lay you dead at her feet and mine."

Griffith actually drew back a step; for the wrath of such a woman was terrible; more terrible perhaps to a brave man than to a coward.

Then he put his hands in his pockets with a dogged air; and said, grinding his teeth: "But—as you are not a man, and I'm not a woman, we can't settle it that way. So I give you the last word, and good day. I'm sore in want of money; but I find I can't pay the price it is like to cost me. Farewell."

"Begone!" said Mrs. Gaunt: "and, this time, for ever. Ruffian, and fool, I loathe the sight of you."

Rose ran weeping to her. "Oh, mamma, don't quarrel with papa:" then back to Griffith, "Oh, papa, don't quarrel with mamma—for my sake."

Griffith hung his head, and said, in a broken voice: "No, my lamb, we twain must not quarrel before thee. We will part in silence, as becomes those that once were dear, and have thee to show for't. Madam, I wish you all health and happiness. Adieu."

He turned on his heel; and Mrs. Gaunt took Rose to her knees, and bent and wept over her. Niobe over her last was not more graceful, nor more sad.

As for Ryder, she stole quietly after her retiring master. She found him peering about, and asked him demurely what he was looking for.

"My good black horse, girl, to take me from this cursed place. Did I not tie him to yon gate?"

"The black horse? Why I sent him for Father Francis. Nay, listen to me, master; you know I was always your friend, and hard upon *her*. Well, since you went, things have come to pass that make me doubt. I do begin to fear you were too hasty."

"Do you tell me this now, woman?" cried Griffith, furiously.

"How could I tell you before? Why did you break your tryst with me? If you had come according to your letter, I'd have told you months ago what I tell you now; but, as I was saying, the priest never came near her after you left; and she never stirred abroad to meet him. More than that, he has left England."

"Remorse! Too late."

"Perhaps it may, sir. I couldn't say; but there is one coming that knows the very truth."

"Who is that?"

"Father Francis. The moment you came, sir, I took it on me to send for him. You know the man: he won't tell a lie to please our Dame. And he knows all: for Leonard has confessed to him. I listened, and heard him say as much. Then, master, be advised, and get the truth from Father Francis."

Griffith trembled. "Francis is an honest man," said he; "I'll wait till he comes. But oh, my lass, I find money may be bought too dear."

"Your chamber is ready, sir; and your clothes put out. Supper is ordered. Let me show you your room. We are all so happy now."

"Well," said he, listlessly, "since my horse is gone, and Francis coming, and I'm wearied and sick of the world, do what you will with me for this one day."

He followed her mechanically to a bedroom, where was a bright fire, and a fine shirt, and his silver-laced suit of clothes airing.

A sense of luxurious comfort struck him at the sight.

"Ay," said he, "I'll dress, and so to supper; I'm main hungry. It seems a man must eat, let his heart be ever so sore."

Before she left him, Ryder asked him coldly why he had broken his appointment with her.

"That is too long a story to tell you now," said he, coolly.

"Another time then," said she; and went out smiling, but bitter at heart.

Griffith had a good wash, and enjoyed certain little conveniences which he had not at the "Packhorse." He doffed his riding suit, and donned the magnificent dress Ryder had selected for him; and with his fine clothes he somehow put on more ceremonious manners.

He came down to the dining-room. To his surprise he found it illuminated with wax candles, and the table and sideboard gorgeous with plate.

Supper soon smoked upon the board; but, though it was set for three, nobody else appeared.

Griffith inquired of Ryder whether he was to sup alone.

She replied, "My mistress desires you not to wait for her. She has no stomach."

"Well, then, I have," said Griffith; and fell to with a will.

Ryder, who waited on this occasion, stood and eyed him with curiosity. His conduct was so unlike a woman's.

Just as he concluded, the door opened, and a burly form entered. Griffith rose, and embraced him with his arms and lips, after the fashion of the day. "Welcome, thou one honest priest!" said he.

"Welcome, thrice welcome, my long-lost son!" said the cordial Francis.

"Sit down, man, and eat with me. I'll begin again, for you."

"Presently, Squire; I've work to do first. Go thou and bid thy mistress come hither to me."

Ryder, to whom this was addressed, went out, and left the gentlemen together.

Father Francis drew out of his pocket two packets, carefully tied and sealed. He took a knife from the table and cut the strings, and broke the seals. Griffith eyed him with curiosity,

Father Francis looked at him. "These," said he, very gravely, "are the letters that Brother Leonard hath written, at sundry times, to Catherine Gaunt, and these are the letters Catherine Gaunt hath written to Brother Leonard."

Griffith trembled, and his face was convulsed.

"Let me read them at once," said he: and stretched out his hand, with eyes like a dog's in the dark.

Francis withdrew them, quietly. "Not till she is also present," said he.

At that Griffith's good-nature, multiplied by a good supper, took the alarm. "Come, come, sir," said he, "have a little mercy. I know you are a just man, and, though a boon companion, most severe in all matters of morality. But, I tell you plainly, if you are going to drag this poor woman in the dirt, I shall go out of the room. What is the use tormenting her? I've told her my mind before her own child: and now I wish I had not. When I caught them in the grove I lifted my hand to strike her, and she never winced; I had better have left that alone too, methinks. D——n the women: you are always in the wrong if you treat 'em like men. They are not wicked; they are weak. And this one hath lain in my bosom, and borne me two children, and one he lieth in the churchyard, and t'other hath her hair and my very eyes: and the truth is, I can't bear any man on earth to miscall her, but myself. God help me; I doubt I love her still too well to sit by and see her tortured. She was all in black for her fault, poor penitent wretch. Give me the letters; but let her be."

Francis was moved by this appeal, but shook his head solemnly; and, ere Griffith could renew his argument, the door was flung open by Ryder, and a stately figure sailed in that took both the gentlemen by surprise.

It was Mrs. Gaunt, in full dress. Rich brocade that swept the ground; magnificent bust, like Parian marble varnished; and on her brow a diadem of emeralds and diamonds that gave her beauty an imperial stamp.

She swept into the room as only fine women can sweep, made Griffith a haughty curtsy, and suddenly lowered her head, and received Father Francis's blessing: then seated herself, and quietly awaited events.

"The brazen jade!" thought Griffith. "But how divinely beautiful!" And he became as agitated as she was calm—in appearance. For, need I say her calmness was put on? Defensive armour made for her by her pride and her sex.

The voice of Father Francis now rose, solid, grave, and too impressive to be interrupted.

"My daughter, and you who are her husband and my friend, I am here to do justice between you both, with God's help; and to show you both your faults.

"Catherine Gaunt, you began the mischief, by encouraging another man to interfere between you and your husband in things secular."

"But, father, he was my director, my priest."

"My daughter, do you believe, with the Protestants, that marriage is a mere civil contract; or do you hold, with us, that it is one of the holy sacraments?"

"Can you ask me?" murmured Kate, reproachfully.

"Well, then, those whom God and the whole Church have in holy sacrament united, what right hath a single priest to disunite in heart, and make the wife false to any part whatever of that most holy vow? I hear, and not from you, that Leonard did set you against your husband's friends, withdrew you from society, and sent him abroad alone. In one word, he robbed your husband of his companion and his friend. The sin was Leonard's; but the fault was yours. You were five years older than Leonard, and a woman of sense and experience; he but a boy by comparison. What right had you to surrender your understanding, in a matter of this kind, to a poor silly priest, fresh from his seminary, and as manifestly without a grain of common sense as he was full of piety?"

This remonstrance produced rather a striking effect on both those who heard it. Mrs. Gaunt seemed much struck with it. She leaned back in her chair, and put her hand to her brow with a sort of despairing gesture that Griffith could not very well understand: it seemed to him so disproportionate.

It softened him, however, and he faltered out, "Ay, father, that is how it all began. Would to heaven it had stopped there."

Francis resumed. "This false step led to consequences you never dreamed of; for one of your romantic notions is, that a priest is an angel. I have known you, in former times, try to take me for an angel: then would I throw cold water on your folly by calling lustily for chimes of beef and mugs of ale. But I suppose Leonard thought himself an angel too; and the upshot was, he fell in love with his neighbour's wife."

"And she with him," groaned Griffith.

"Not so," said Francis; "but perhaps she was nearer it than she thinks."

"Prove that," said Mrs. Gaunt, "and I'll fall on my knees to him before you."

Francis smiled, and proceeded. "To be sure, from the moment you discovered Leonard was in love with you, you drew back, and conducted yourself with prudence and propriety. Read these letters, sir, and tell me what you think of them."

He handed them to Griffith. Griffith's hand trembled visibly as he took them.

"Stay," said Father Francis; "your better way will be to read the whole correspondence according to their dates. Begin with this of Mrs. Gaunt's."

Griffith read the letter in an audible whisper.

Mrs. Gaunt listened with all her ears.

"DEAR FATHER AND FRIEND,—The words you spoke to me to-day admit but one meaning; you are jealous of my husband.

"Then you must be—how can I write it?—almost in love with me.

"So then my poor husband was wiser than I. He saw a rival in you: and he has one.

"I am deeply, deeply shocked. I ought to be very angry too; but, thinking of your solitary condition, and all the good you have done to my soul, my heart has no place for aught but pity. Only, as I am in my senses, and you are not, you must now obey me, as heretofore I have obeyed you. You must seek another sphere of duty, without delay.

"These seem harsh words from me to you. You will live to see they are kind ones.

"Write me one line, and no more, to say you will be ruled by me in this.

"God and the saints have you in their holy keeping. So prays your affectionate and

"Sorrowful daughter and true friend,

"CATHERINE GAUNT."

"Poor soul!" said Griffith. "Said I not that women are not wicked, but weak? Who would think that after this he could get the better of her good resolves—the villain!"

"Now read his reply," said Father Francis.

"Ay," said Griffith. "So this is his one word of reply, is it? three pages closely writ—the villain, oh the villain!"

"Read the villain's letter," said Francis, calmly.

The letter was very humble and pathetic; the reply of a good, though erring man, who owned, that in a moment of weakness, he had been betrayed into a feeling inconsistent with his holy profession. He begged his correspondent, however, not to judge him quite so hardly. He reminded her of his solitary life, his natural melancholy: and assured her that all men in his condition had moments when they envied those whose bosoms had partners, "Such a cry of anguish," said he, "was once rung from a maiden queen: maugre all her pride. The Queen of Scots hath a son; and I am but a barren stock." He went on to say that prayer and vigilance united do much. "Do not despair so soon of me. Flight is not cure: let me rather stay and, with God's help and the saints', overcome this unhappy weakness. If I fail, it will indeed be time for me to go and never again see the angelic face of my daughter and my benefactress."

Griffith laid down the letter. He was somewhat softened by it; and said, gently, "I cannot understand it. This is not the letter of a thorough bad man neither."

"No," said Father Francis, coldly, "'tis the letter of a self-deceiver: and there is no more dangerous man, to himself and others, than your self-deceiver. But now let us see whether he can throw dust in her eyes, as well as his own." And he handed him Kate's reply.

The first word of it was, "You deceive yourself." The writer then insisted, quietly, that he owed it to himself, to her, and to her husband, whose happiness he was destroying, to leave the place at her request.

"Either you must go, or I," said she: "and pray let it be you. Also this place is unworthy of your high gifts: and I love you, in my way, the way I mean to love you when we meet again—in Heaven; and I labour your advancement to a sphere more worthy of you."

I wish space permitted me to lay the whole correspondence before the reader ; but I must confine myself to its general purport.

It proceeded in this way: the priest, humble, eloquent, pathetic; but gently, yet pertinaciously, clinging to the place: the lady, gentle, wise, and firm, detaching with her soft fingers, first one hand, then another, of the poor priest's, till at last he was driven to the sorry excuse that he had no money to travel with, nor place to go to.

"I can't understand it," said Griffith. "Are these letters all forged, or are there two Kate Gaunts? the one that wrote these prudent letters, and the one I caught upon this very priest's arm. Perdition!"

Mrs. Gaunt started to her feet. "Methinks 'tis time for me to leave the room," said she, scarlet.

"Gently, my good friends; one thing at a time," said Francis. "Sit thou down, impetuous. The letters, sir, what think you of them?"

"I see no harm in them," said Griffith.

"No harm! Is that all? But I say these are very remarkable letters, sir: and they show us that a woman may be innocent and unsuspicious, and so seem foolish, yet may be wise for all that. In her early communication with Leonard

'——at Wisdom's gate Suspicion slept;
And thought no ill where no ill seemed.'

But, you see, suspicion being once aroused, wisdom was not to be lulled nor blinded. But that is not all: these letters breathe a spirit of Christian charity; of true, and rare, and exalted piety. Tender are they, without passion; wise, yet not cold; full of conjugal love, and of filial pity for an erring father, whom she leads, for his good, with firm yet dutiful hand. Trust to my great experience: doubt the chastity of snow rather than hers who could write these pure and exquisite lines. My good friend, you heard me rebuke and sneer at this poor lady for being too innocent and unsuspicious of man's frailty: now hear me own to you that I could no more have written these angelic letters than a barn-door fowl could soar to the mansions of the saints in heaven."

This unexpected tribute took Mrs. Gaunt's heart by storm; she threw her arms round Father Francis's neck, and wept upon his shoulder.

"Ah!" she sobbed, "you are the only one left that loves me."

She could not understand justice praising her: it must be love.

"Ay," said Griffith, in a broken voice, "she writes like an angel: she speaks like an angel: she looks like an angel. My heart says she is an angel. But my eyes have shown me she is naught. I left her, unable to walk, by her way of it; I came back, and found her on that priest's arm, springing along, like a greyhound." He buried his head in his hands, and groaned aloud.

Francis turned to Mrs. Gaunt, and said, a little severely, "How do you account for that?"

"I'll tell *you*, Father," said Kate, "because you love me. I do not speak to *you*, sir: for you never loved me."

"I could give thee the lie," said Griffith, in a trembling voice; "but 'tis not worth while. Know, sir, that within twenty-four hours after I caught her with that villain, I lay a dying for her sake; and lost my wits; and, when I came to, they were a making my shroud in the very room where I lay. No matter; no matter; I never loved her."

"Alas! poor soul!" sighed Kate: "would I had died ere I brought thee to that!" And, with this, they both began to cry at the same moment.

"Ay, poor fools," said Father Francis, softly; "neither of ye loved t'other; that is plain. So now sit you there, and let us have your explanation; for you must own appearances are strong against you."

Mrs. Gaunt drew her stool to Francis's knee; and addressing herself to him alone, explained as follows:—

"I saw Father Leonard was giving way, and only wanted one good push, after a manner. Well, you know I had got him, by my friends, a good place in Ireland: and I had money by me for his journey; so, when my husband talked of going to the fair, I thought, 'Oh if I could but get this settled to his mind before he comes back.' So I wrote a line to Leonard. You can read it if you like. 'Tis dated the 30th of September, I suppose.

"I will," said Francis: and read this out:—

"DEAR FATHER AND FRIEND,—You have fought the good fight, and conquered. Now, therefore, I *will* see you once 'more, and thank you for my husband (he is so unhappy), and put the money for your journey into your hand myself; your journey to Ireland. You are the Duke of Leinster's chaplain; for I have accepted that place for you. Let me see you to-morrow in the Grove, for a few minutes, at high noon. God bless you.

"CATHERINE GAUNT."

"Well, father," said Mrs. Gaunt, "'tis true that I could only walk two or three times across the room. But, alack, you know what women are; excitement gives us strength. With thinking that our unhappiness was at an end; that, when he should come back from the fair, I should fling my arm round his neck, and tell him I had removed the cause of his misery, and so of mine, I seemed to have wings; and I did walk with Leonard, and talked with rapture of the good he was to do in Ireland, and how he was to be a mitred abbot one day (for he is a great man), and poor little me be proud of him; and how we were all to be happy together in heaven, where is no marrying nor giving in marriage. This was our discourse; and I was just putting the purse into his hands, and bidding him God-speed, when he—for whom I fought against my woman's nature, and took this trying task upon me—broke in upon us, with the face of a fiend; trampled on the poor good priest, that deserved veneration and consolation from him, of all men; and raised his hand to me; and was not man enough to kill me after all; but called me—ask him what he called me—see if he dares to say it again before you; and then ran away like a coward as he is, from the lady he had defiled with his rude tongue, and the heart he had broken. Forgive him? that I never will; never; never."

"Who asked you to forgive him?" said the shrewd priest. "Your own heart. Come, look at him."

"Not I," said she, irresolutely. Then, still more feebly: "He is nought to me." And so stole a look at him.

Griffith, pale as ashes, had his hand on his brow, and his eyes were fixed with horror and remorse.

"Something tells me she has spoken the truth," he said, in a quavering voice. Then, with concentrated horror, "But if so—oh God, what have I done?—What shall I do?"

Mrs. Gaunt extended her arms towards him, across the priest.

"Why, fall at thy wife's knees, and ask her to forgive thee."

Griffith obeyed: he fell on his knees, and Mrs. Gaunt leaned her head on Francis's shoulder, and gave her hand across him to her remorse-stricken husband.

Neither spoke, nor desired to speak; and even Father Francis sat silent and enjoyed that sweet glow which sometimes blesses the peacemaker, even, in this world of wrangles and jars.

But the good soul had ridden hard, and the neglected meats emitted savoury odours: and by-and-by he said, drily, "I wonder whether that fat pullet tastes as well as it smells: can you tell me, Squire?"

"Oh, inhospitable wretch that I am," said Mrs. Gaunt: "I thought but of my own heart."

"And forgot the stomach of your unspiritual father. But, my dear, you are pale, you tremble."

"'Tis nothing, sir: I shall soon be better. Sit you down and sup: I will return anon."

She retired, not to make a fuss; but her heart palpitated violently, and she had to sit down on the stairs.

Ryder, who was prowling about, found her there, and fetched her harts-horn.

Mrs. Gaunt got better; but felt so languid and also hysterical, that she retired to her own room for the night, attended by the faithful Ryder, to whom she confided that a reconciliation had taken place, and, to celebrate it, gave her a dress she had only worn a year. This does not sound queenly to you ladies; but know that a week's wear tells far more on the flimsy trash you wear now-a-days, than a year did on the glorious silks of Lyons. Mrs. Gaunt put on; thick as broad-cloth, and embroidered so cunningly by the loom, that it would pass for rarest needle-work. Besides, in those days, silk was silk.

As Ryder left her, she asked, "Where is master to lie to-night?"

Mrs. Gaunt was not pleased at this question being put to her. She would have preferred to leave that to Griffith. And, as she was a singular mixture of frankness and finesse, I believe she had retired to her own room partly to test Griffith's heart. If he was as sincere as she was, he would not be content with a public reconciliation.

But the question being put to her plump, and by one of her own sex, she coloured faintly, and said, "Why, is there not a bed in his room?"

"Oh yes, madam."

"Then see it be well aired. Put down all the things before the fire; and then tell me; I'll come and see. The feather bed, mind, as well as the sheets and blankets."

Ryder executed all this with zeal. She did more: though Griffith and Francis sat up very late, she sat up too; and, on the gentlemen leaving the supper-room, she met them both, with bed-candles, in a delightful cap, and undertook, with cordial smiles, to show them both their chambers.

"Tread softly on the landing, an if it please you, gentlemen. My mistress hath been unwell; but she is in a fine sleep now, by the blessing, and I would not have her disturbed."

Good, faithful, single-hearted Ryder!

Father Francis went to bed thoughtful. There was something about Griffith he did not like: the man every now and then broke out into boisterous raptures; and presently relapsed into moody thoughtfulness. Francis almost feared that his cure was only temporary.

In the morning, before he left, he drew Mrs. Gaunt aside, and told her his misgivings. She replied that she thought she knew what was amiss, and would soon set that right.

Griffith tossed and turned in his bed, and spent a stormy night. His mind was in a confused whirl, and his heart distracted. The wife he had loved so tenderly, proved to be the very reverse of all he had lately thought her! She was pure as snow, and had always loved him: loved him now, and only wanted a good excuse to take him to her arms again. But Mercy Vint!—his wife, his benefactress! a woman as chaste as Kate, as strict in life and morals—what was to become of her? How could he tell her she was not his wife? how reveal to her her own calamity, and his treason? And, on the other hand, desert her without a word! and leave her hoping, fearing, pining, all her life! Affection, humanity, gratitude, alike forbade it.

He came down in the morning, pale for him, and worn with the inward struggle.

Naturally there was a restraint between him and Mrs. Gaunt; and only short sentences passed between them.

He saw the peacemaker off, and then wandered all over the premises, and the past came nearer, and the present seemed to retire into the background.

He wandered about like one in a dream; and was so self-absorbed, that he did not see Mrs. Gaunt coming towards him, with observant eyes.

She met him full; he started like a guilty thing.

"Are you afraid of me?" said she, sweetly.

"No, my dear, not exactly; and yet I am: afraid, or ashamed, or both."

"You need not. I said I forgive you; and you know I am not one that does things by halves."

"You are an angel!" said he, warmly; "but (suddenly relapsing into despondency) we shall never be happy together again."

She sighed. "Say not so. Time and sweet recollections may heal even this wound by degrees."

"God grant it," said he, despairingly.

"And, though we can't be lovers again all at once, we may be friends; to begin, tell me, what have you on your mind? Come, make a friend of me."

He looked at her in alarm.

She smiled. "Shall I guess?" said she.

"You will never guess," said he; "and I shall never have the heart to tell you."

"Let me try. Well, I think you have run in debt, and are afraid to ask me for the money."

Griffith was greatly relieved by this conjecture; he drew a long breath: and, after a pause, said, cunningly, "What made you think that?"

"Because you came here for money, and not for happiness. You told me so in the Grove."

"That is true. What a sordid wretch you must think me?"

"No, because you were under a delusion. But I do believe you are just the man to turn reckless, when you thought me false, and go drinking and dicing." She added, eagerly, "I do not suspect you of anything worse."

He assured her that was not the way of it.

"Then tell me the way of it. You must not think, because I pester you not with questions, I have no curiosity. Oh, how often I have longed to be a bird, and watch you day and night unseen! How would you have liked that? I wish you had been one, to watch me. Ah, you don't answer. Could you have borne so close an inspection, sir?"

Griffith shuddered at the idea; and his eyes fell before the full grey orbs of his wife.

"Well, never mind," said she, "tell me your story."

"Well, then, when I left you, I was raving mad."

"That is true, I'll be sworn."

"I let my horse go; and he took me near a hundred miles from here, and stopped at—a farmhouse. The good people took me in."

"God bless them for it. I'll ride and thank them."

"Nay, nay; 'tis too far. There I fell sick of a fever, a brain-fever: the doctor blooded me."

"Alas! would he had taken mine instead."

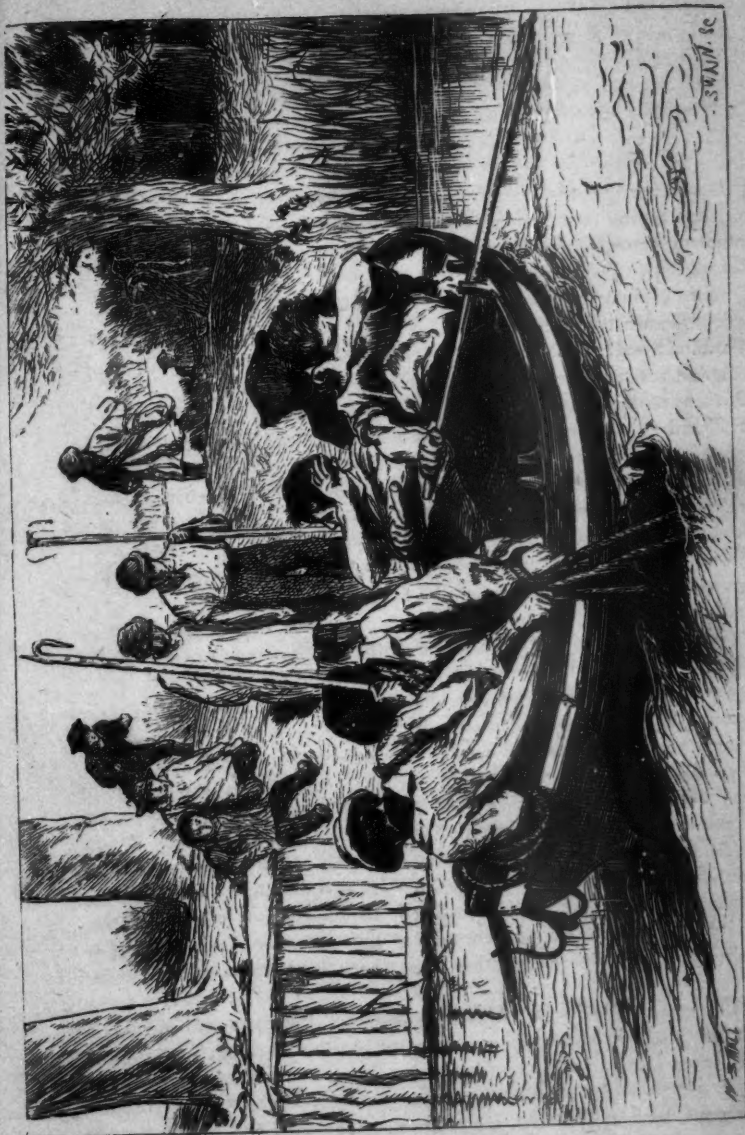
"And I lost my wits for several days; and when I came back, I was weak as water, and given up by the doctor: and the first thing I saw, was an old hag set a making of my shroud."

Here the narrative was interrupted a moment by Mrs. Gaunt seizing him convulsively; and then holding him tenderly, as if he was even now about to be taken from her.

"The good people nursed me, and so did their daughter, and I came back from the grave. I took an inn; but I gave up that, and had to pay forfeit; and so my money all went; but they kept me on. To be sure I helped on the farm: they kept a hostelry as well. By-and-by came that murrain among the cattle. Did you have it in these parts too?"

"I know not; nor care. Prithee, leave cattle, and talk of thyself."

"Well, in a word, they were ruined, and going to be sold up. I could not



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"GRIFFITH GAUNT."

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bear that : I became bondsman for the old man. It was the least I could do. Kate, they had saved thy husband's life."

"Not a word more, Griffith. How much stand you pledged for?"

"A large sum."

"Would five hundred pounds be of any avail?"

"Five hundred pounds! Ay, that it would, and to spare; but where can I get so much money? And the time so short?"

"Give me thy hand, and come with me," said Mrs. Gaunt, ardently.

She took his hand, and made a swift rush across the lawn. It was not exactly running, nor walking, but some grand motion she had when excited. She put him to his stride to keep up with her at all; and in two minutes she had him into her boudoir. She unlocked a bureau, all in a hurry, and took out a bag of gold. "There!" she cried, thrusting it into his hand, and blooming all over with joy and eagerness: "I thought you would want money; so I saved it up. You shall not be in debt a day longer. Now mount thy horse, and carry it to those good souls: only, for my sake, take the gardener with thee—I have no groom now but he—and both well armed."

"What! go this very day?"

"Ay, this very hour. I can bear thy absence for a day or two more; I have borne it so long: but I cannot bear thy plighted word to stand in doubt a day, no not an hour. I am your wife, sir, your true and loving wife; your honour is mine, and is as dear to me now as it was when you saw me with Father Leonard in the Grove, and read me all awry. Don't wait a moment, begone at once."

"Nay, nay, if I go to-morrow I shall be in time."

"Ay, but," said Mrs. Gaunt, very softly, "I am afraid if I keep you another hour I shall not have the heart to let you go at all: and the sooner gone, the sooner back for good, please God. There, give me one kiss, to live on, and begone this instant."

He covered her hands with kisses and tears. "I'm not worthy to kiss any higher than thy hand," he said: and so ran sobbing from her.



FROM MESHED TO TEHERAN.

AS in the kingdom of Persia everything depends upon the character of the reigning sovereign, so in the several provinces the security and comfort of the highways depend on their governors for the time being. The journey from Meshed to Teheran is considered a bold undertaking, especially as regards that first portion of it through Khorassan, where Turkomans, Beloochees, and Kurds give cause for anxiety to all, and particularly to the timid, cowardly Persian. At the time I started on my homeward journey, Murad Mirza, surnamed "The Sword of the Empire," was governor of the province. Amongst other expressions of praise lavished upon him by the public was the saying, that a child might walk upon the highways with a plateful of ducats on his head without danger and without fear. Nor indeed was the compliment conveyed by this hyperbole entirely undeserved, for he was an energetic and talented official, who spared no pains to keep the public roads safe, and to encourage commerce.

I was in high spirits as I set out on my journey in the company of my Tartar. Two roads lead from Meshed to Nishapur; one over a mountainous tract, the other through a lower hilly country. I chose the latter. As I passed out of the city, mounted on an active nag, the horse of my Tartar being loaded with all things requisite for the journey, I felt in an exceptionally cheerful humour. It was not merely the pleasurable feeling of returning home which produced this effect. The contrast between the journey now before me, furnished with all the proper equipments, and that which I had made, suffering from all sorts of privations amid the deserts of Turkestan, without doubt greatly aided. We were continually falling in with caravans either of pilgrims or of merchandise, going towards or returning from the holy city. On such occasions greetings are always exchanged. How great was my surprise at recognizing an old acquaintance in the leader of one of these caravans. He was a Shirazer in whose company I had two years before visited the ruins of Persepolis, Naktchi Rustam, and that fair city which was the birthplace of the poet Hafiz. To have travelled a long time with a man is in Asia looked upon as a sort of relationship. The talkative Shirazer was delighted to see me. The caravan was obliged, *volens volens*, to submit to a quarter of an hour's halt, while we seated ourselves on the sand to enjoy together the friendly kallian (Persian pipe). As its fragrant smoke rose before my eyes, vivid pictures of the past, of the majestic monuments of bygone civilization, arose before my memory. How those recollections animated me! Valerius in his chains, the majestic figure of the proud Shapur, above him floating the form of the beneficent Ormuzd,—all those magnificent bas-reliefs hovered like a Fata Morgana before my mind's eye; but their charms were multiplied as I thought that since I saw them I had seen, and had now left behind me, the classical realms of Bactria and Sogdiana, which had inspired terror even in the stout hearts of the Macedonians of Alexander.

I was obliged to promise my Shirazer friend that I would speedily revisit his native country, for it was not till I had calmed him with this promise that

we could part from one another. So gaily did I then go on my way that the first day's journey was not in the least fatiguing to me, and by night we had reached the station Sherif Abad. This was the first evening I spent as a well-equipped traveller. In my previous wanderings in Turkestan I had first of all to collect firewood and flour; I had to pronounce prayers and blessings as payment for my night quarters; and I was always liable to be turned out of the house tired and hungry. Now, on the contrary, I was a great man. I rode proudly into the Tchaparkhane (post-house), and with a loud voice called for lodgings; for although I was still completely Oriental, so far as outward appearance went, the postmaster could easily observe that he had to do with one who had at his command a sufficiency of the true elixir of life. And what will a Persian not do for money? My Tartar prepared me an excellent supper; rice, sugar, fat, meat,—in a word, everything in abundance. The eyes of my simple Uzbeg sparkled with joy as he thought of his former poverty and looked on the plenty which surrounded him. If the supper which he could prepare was not exactly fit to appear on the table of Lucullus, it was a very good one for a Persian wayside station.

We had before us, as our next day's work, a distance of nine German miles to the next station, Kademgiah. Nine fersakh in Khorassan is a good deal, for there is a proverb that in that province the miles are as endless as the chatter of women, and that he who measured them must have done so with a broken chain. European travellers, without exception, complain of the monotony and wearisome character of the road. But what was that to me who had escaped from the torments of Turkestan? Quite alone with my Tartar, and well armed and well mounted, I now for the first time felt the charms of true travelling. Oh ye who coop yourselves up amidst the heats of July in close railway carriages, and must perforce delight yourselves with the dusty, grimy countenance of the guard, do ye know what travelling really means? A good saddle is better than all your stuffed cushions. Thereon a man feels himself free and unconstrained. His bridle is his Bradshaw, his sword is his law, his gun is the policeman who protects him, and though he is an outlaw and fair game for all who meet him, so all are fair game for him. When in addition to all this he is well acquainted with the languages, laws, and customs of the land through which he passes, and can dispense with dragomans, firmans, and guards, then his journey is truly delightful. Travelling the whole day in the open air, how pleasant are the hours of midday halt! And who can describe the enjoyments of the evening, when, having arrived at the spot where he means to rest for the night, his steed pasturing near him, and he himself surrounded by the saddles and baggage, he stares at the crackling fire which is to cook his savoury supper? The rays of the setting sun are not then so bright or cheerful as the glances of the traveller's eyes. No meal is so appetising as his supper, and his slumber under the starry canopy of heaven is a hundred times more refreshing than that of those who sleep on luxurious down in princely chambers.

Kademgiah, the name of my second station, means "footprints," and is a place of religious pilgrimage, where pious faith sees on a marble stone the print of Ali's foot. Such miraculous footprints are by no means uncommon in the

East. Christians, Mohammedans, and Brahmins—all hold them in equal veneration. What especially excited my wonder was the vast size of most of them, suggesting as they did rather the idea of the foot of an unwieldy elephant than that of a man. But religious sentimentalism does not trouble itself about such trifles as logic and æsthetics. In the mountains near Shiraz, for instance, there is a footprint three feet long; the one in Herat is of the same size, as is also that on Mount Sinai; and even in distant Khoten in Chinese Tartary a large footprint is shown, where, as the story goes, the holy Jaffer once strolled near Sadik. As I have observed, their monstrous size creates no surprise or doubt in the minds of the pious. *Mundus vult decipi ergo decipiatur.*

Under the protection of the holy place stand numerous inns for the accommodation of pilgrims. In one of these I had comfortably established myself, and was just engaged in making tea in the shade of the fine poplars, when one of the priests of the place made his appearance, and with a devout look invited me to visit the holy spot. As the only thing the priest seemed to want at the time was a cup of tea, I treated him to one. His further importunities proved him to have pecuniary gain in view; so as the cold marble stone which contains the sacred footprint was of little interest to me who had seen so many of its kind already, I contrived at the expense of a few krans (francs) to dispense at once with the society of my guest and the performance of a religious duty.

My third day's march led me over a region of low hills into the plain of Nishapur, so celebrated in Persia, nay, I may say in all Asia. Djölge-i Nishapur (plain of Nishapur) is in the eyes of a Persian the *ne plus ultra* of beauty and wealth. For him the air there is purer and more fragrant than elsewhere; its water the sweetest in the world; and its products without rivals in creation. It is difficult to describe the proud joy which is expressed on his countenance as he points out the hills lying towards the north-east, which are rich in turquoise mines and precious metals. For myself, I must confess that the plain, as also the city situated in its midst, produced a pleasing, but by no means entrancing effect on me. Its historical importance would have hardly occurred to me, had it not been that a Persian, who discovered I was a foreigner, joined in conversation with me by the way, and uninvited began to celebrate with no little exaggeration the praises of his native city. "What is the use of all your talking?" cried I; "look at the ruins strewed round us. Do you call this a flourishing country? Observe this watchtower, which guards the husbandman against the predatory incursions of the Turkomans. Is that a sign of prosperous circumstances?" But the Persian did not allow himself to be led from his purpose, and was deaf to all my remarks. In the eyes of an Iranian the presence of ruins is an essential feature in a scene of civilization. In spite of all my sarcasms he continued to recount the thousands of village and irrigation works to be found spread over this plain.

No less inconsiderable did I find the town Nishapur itself. The bazaar is tolerably well filled with European and Persian wares, but the traveller in vain explores the town for remains of that wealth and architectural beauty which have been so highly praised by Eastern historians. The only things of note in the town are the workshops for grinding and polishing the turquoises found

in the neighbourhood. These stones are in their unwrought state of a grey colour, and only acquire their well-known sky-blue hue after repeated polishings. The deeper its colour, the more prominent its form, and the smoother its surface, so much the more valuable is a stone—veins being regarded as blemishes. A curious phenomenon observable in these turquoises is that many specimens lose their colour a few days after being polished. The inexperienced purchaser who is not aware of this circumstance not seldom becomes a prey to Persian fraud; and many pilgrims, who have purchased in Nishapur stones of a brilliant azure, find themselves obliged on their return home to throw them away as faded and colourless. At the present day these mines are by no means so profitable as in former times, inasmuch as they are farmed altogether for the low rent of two thousand ducats yearly. The commerce in the stones, which was once actively carried on between Persia and Europe, especially Russia, has also of late years very much fallen off.

Before we leave Nishapur, we must notice two celebrated poets, whose graves confer no small renown on this old city. One of them is Ferid ed die Attar, the great mystic and philosopher, who wrote the interesting work *Mantik et Tejr* (The Logic of Birds). In this book all sorts of the feathered creation are introduced, and they dispute eagerly, and with great curiosity, about the cause of their existence and the source of all truth. Eagles, vultures, falcons, and ravens, doves, turtles, and nightingales—all are alike interested in those important questions. Hudhud, the all-knowing, magical bird of Solomon, is introduced as their instructor, and from him they request in a curious manner the much-desired information. He conducts himself modestly, lays before them artful riddles, and leads the listening troop on the path by which they may reach Simurg, the phoenix of the Orientals, and symbol of the highest light. It is easy to understand that the birds represent humanity, Hudhud the prophet, and Simurg the Deity. The poem has obtained a great and deserved celebrity by its splendid wealth of imagery and its many passages of singular beauty. The second poet whose bones rest in Nishapur is Khiyam, the very antipodes of the first. As the pious would say, he was an atheist, a profligate reviler of Mohammed and of Islam, who trampled under his sacrilegious feet all that is holiest, fairest, and best, and directed his satirical raillery against the most sacred laws and obligations. Yet Khiyam is, for all this, not less read than Ferid. Persia is in fact just that country of Asia which most clearly shows its Oriental character by representing the most opposite extremes. Here daring atheism and lowly devotion encounter one another, and what is more remarkable, without seriously shocking one another. Persia certainly affords the most complete picture of the Eastern world.

From Nishapur the road leads to Sebzevar, distant three days' march. The intervening stations have been often described. They do not contain anything of particular interest, any more than the last-mentioned town itself, which is surrounded by a strong wall, and lies in the midst of a tolerably fruitful plain. From Sebzevar the traveller in four days reaches Abbasabad, which is reckoned one of the most important posts in the country, for here com-

mence the four "stations of terror" of Khorassan. They are Abbasabad,* Miyandesht, Meyame, and Shahrud. No one who has travelled in Persia can have failed to have heard their names, so rich are they in danger and in strange stories of adventure. They are the Scylla and Charybdis of the Iranians. Whoever amongst them would acquire a character for bravery never forgets to introduce their names into the story of his adventures. Do you ask why? The answer is very simple. The four stations are posted on the edge of the great plain which stretches far away into the steppes of the Turkomans. No river, no mountain, breaks its uniformity, and as those rapacious children of the desert have but little respect for political boundaries, their predatory inroads are frequent, and these four places are just those which suffer most from their ravages. They seldom fail to gain largely by such incursions, as here runs the main road towards Khorassan, which is ever full of heavily-laden caravans, and well-equipped pilgrims. The Persian never wearies of talking about adventures with the Turkomans. At one of the stations, among much else that was curious, I heard the following story. A Persian general had sent his troop of six thousand men on before him, and was only lingering for a few minutes to enjoy comfortably the last whiffs of his kullian. He had just finished his pipe, and was about to follow his soldiers in the company of a few body-servants, when he was pounced upon by a party of Turkomans and placed on their swift horses. In a few minutes he was robbed and made captive, and in a few weeks he was sold as a slave in the market of Khiva for the sum of twenty-five ducats.

On another occasion it happened that a pilgrim was captured on his way to the shrine of Imam Riza. Luckily he saw the storm approaching, and had just time to hide his little all behind a stone before the plunderers came upon him. After he had been sold as a slave and brought to Khiva, he wrote from thence to his tender spouse as follows:—"My dear child, in such and such a place, under such and such a stone, I have hidden forty ducats. Send thirty of them to this place to ransom thy loving husband, and take care of the remainder until I return from the land of the Turkomans, this house of bondage, in which I must now perforce perform menial service."

It is true that there is here sufficient cause for fear and caution, but the ridiculous cowardice of the Iranians is the main source of their misfortunes. Their caravans are wont to assemble here in large masses. They are escorted by soldiers with drawn swords, and cannons with their matches burning. Often their numbers are very considerable. No sooner, however, do a few desperate desert robbers make their appearance than caravan and escort alike lose both courage and presence of mind, fling away their weapons, offer all their property to the enemy, and, putting out their hands to be fettered,

* These four stations can none of them be considered as places which are inhabited by choice. Their inhabitants are ever confined within their walls, nor do they dare to occupy themselves with agriculture. The government maintains them to keep up the roads. Abbasabad is a colony planted for this purpose. Its inhabitants are of Georgian origin, and still retain in their physiognomies much of their original Caucasian character; although, as one of them observed to me, the beauty of the people degenerates continually, inasmuch as they can here no longer drink the Kahiti wine, the Tokay of the Caucasus.

allow themselves to be carried away into painful, often lifelong, captivity and slavery. I rode from station to station with my Tartar for my only escort—a journey which no European had ever made before me. Of course I was warned not to do so. But in my Turkoman dress what cared I for Turkoman robbers? As for my Tartar, he looked wistfully around in hope that he might espy a countryman of his. If we had fallen in with some of those Sunnite sons of the desert, travelling as we were in a Shiite land, I believe that, so far from injuring a mollah of their faith, they would have rewarded us richly for the *fatihah* (blessing) which we should have given them. For four days I wandered in the steppe; once in the evening twilight I lost my way; yet not a single Turkoman crossed my path. I encountered no one except a few trembling Persian travellers. But what tormented me more than all the terrors of Turkoman cruelty, was the intolerable length of the day's marches, especially of the last between Meyame and Shahrud. On that occasion I was sixteen hours in the saddle. It is the longest station in all Persia, and especially wearying both to man and beast.

The reader will easily imagine the eagerness with which the traveller's eyes look out for the gardens which surround Shahrud. As this town is situated at the foot of a mountain, it is visible for miles off on the plain. The wearied horseman thinks that he has already reached the end of his day's journey, when it is in reality still five German miles distant. The road is as monotonous as can possibly be imagined. It affords nothing whatsoever to attract the eye. In summer, owing to utter want of water, it must be very painful to travel over it. Unfortunately, I had mistaken a village which lies in the neighbourhood of Shahrud for the town itself, which at that point of the road was concealed in a hollow. My rage, when I discovered my mistake, may be easily conceived. It was in truth no joke to have added to the long day's journey a good half-hour's additional ride. I had mounted my horse before twelve o'clock the night before, and it was already past six o'clock in the evening, when I at last gained the badly-paved streets of Shahrud, and dismounted in one of its principal caravanserais. My poor beast was utterly exhausted, and I myself scarcely less so. But, as I looked around the square of the caravanserai, how great was my astonishment at beholding a son of Britain, yes, actually an unmistakeable living Englishman, with a genuine Manchester physiognomy, sitting before the door of one of the cells. An Englishman alone here in Shahrud—that is certainly a rarity, almost a miracle. I rushed towards him. He also, although apparently sunk in deep thought, regarded me with wondering eyes. My Bokhariot dress, and my evident fatigue had attracted his attention. Who knows what he thought of me then? For myself, in spite of my extreme exhaustion, I could not resist the charm of this extraordinary rencontre. I dragged myself towards him, and, staring on him with weary eyes, addressed him with a "How are you, sir?" He seemed not to have understood me, so I repeated my question. At this he sprang from his seat in surprise; the greatest astonishment was expressed in his countenance, while he gave vent to his feelings with "Well, I—Where have you learned English?" asked he, stammering with emotion; "perhaps in India." I should have liked to have screwed up his curiosity a peg or two

higher, and at any other time might have enjoyed a mystification amazingly. But my long ride had so thoroughly tired me out that I had not the spirits required for carrying on the joke. I made a plain confession who and what I was. His joy was indescribable. To the great astonishment of my Tartar, who till now had always regarded me as a true believer, he embraced me and took me into his quarters. We spent a famous evening together, and I allowed him to induce me to rest there the whole of the next day; for it did the poor fellow no end of good to be able to speak of the West after six months' separation from European society. A few months after our strange meeting he was robbed and murdered on the road. His name was Longfield, and he was agent for a large Lancashire house, for which he had to purchase cotton. He had to carry a great deal of money about him, and unfortunately forgot, as do too many, that Persia is not the civilized land which the glowing representations of its lying agents in Europe would lead us to suppose, and that one cannot place much reliance on passports and royal firmans.

Shahrud is an important commercial post between Mazenderan and Irak. The road which leads to the first-named province is very romantic, but withal very badly kept. It passes through a mountainous country well supplied with water down to the shores of the Caspian Sea. Especially picturesque is the Rudi Shah (King's brook), whose waters run with loud noise, bright and clear, through the streets of the town. There are here several caravanserais, and in one of the largest is the factory of the Russian commercial company "Kankaz," which has of late years almost entirely driven English commerce out of Khorassan, by means of its import trade from Astrachan Baku through Astrabad. From the Gulf of Kamschatka down to Constantinople, throughout all Asia, the Russians have an enormous influence, and to none is that more perilous than to the British Lion. They already begin to tread on his heels, nor is the time far distant when their sharp talons will be thrust into his hide.

From this place I had still eleven days' journey to make before I reached Teheran. The road here is safe. Station after station affords nothing of interest, unless it is the remarkable difference between the manners of the inhabitants of Khorassan and those of Irak. The people of the former province, owing to its proximity to Central Asia, have adopted many rude habits, while in Irak the polish of Iranian civilization is more and more visible. Here the traveller—when he is supposed to be possessed of hard cash—is always received with the greatest courtesy. They put on such a behaviour, as if they did nothing for the sake of the money. The guest is treated as a welcome apparition. Presents are offered to him accompanied by the very quintessence of courtly phrases, and, woe to the purse of the inexperienced! As, during my travels in Southern Persia, I had become well acquainted with Iranian etiquette, I always played the Iranian on such occasions. Compliments I met with compliments even more courtly. I accepted the presents offered me, but with many flowers of speech I invited the giver to partake of his own gifts. He could not resist my high-flown bombast, and my frequent quotations from Saadi and his other favourite poets.

He forgot himself, and snatched eagerly at the food and the fruits which he had himself heaped upon the khondja (wooden table), and often gave me to understand by repeated and significant shakes of the head—"Effendi, thou art more Iranian than the Iranians, thou art too polished to be sincere." And certainly it is no easy matter to take in a Persian. Habits and a system of education, dating centuries, nay, I may say, millenniums back, have rendered him perfect in all the arts of fraud and all the niceties of courtesy—mere outward courtesy of course I mean. It often happens that the careless European is taken in by the simplest peasant, nay, even by the youngest child. Words, gestures, every movement, combine to deceive the stranger uninitiated in the manners of the country. The European especially, who, proud of his superiority in civilization, despises and undervalues the Oriental, is most frequently and most signally taken in.

The nearer I drew towards Teheran, the more inclement became the weather. We were already in the latter part of December. I had felt the cold of the approaching winter while still on the plains, but here in more elevated regions it was doubly severe. In Persia a journey of three or four hours often makes a serious difference in the temperature. But the weather in the two stations Goshe and Ahuan was so very severe as to cause me anxiety. These two places are situated on a mountain, and, furthermore, can only afford accommodation to a small number of guests. In Goshe I had the good fortune to have the whole caravanserai to myself, so that I was able to make myself quite comfortable within its walls, while without a cruel, bitter cold prevailed. The next day, on my way to Ahuan, I found snow in many parts of the roads. The biting north wind compelled me often to dismount in order to warm my feet. When I got to Ahuan, the snow lay already several feet deep, and was frozen so hard that the road ran in some places between solid walls of snow. Shelter and fuel were the objects of my longing wishes as I caught sight of the lonely post-house. As my eye wandered over the snow-clad hills, I could discern nowhere else the least trace of a human habitation, nor even of the ruins of one. As is the custom, we dashed into the court of the Tchaparhane with an affectation of haste calculated to excite attention. The postmaster was extremely courteous, which was in itself a good sign, and I was overjoyed as he led me into a sooty, but withal well-sheltered room; and I scarcely heard what he was saying, as he with self-satisfaction, and at great length explained to me that he was every minute expecting the arrival of the lady of Sipeh Salar, the Persian generalissimo and minister of war, who was on her return from a pilgrimage to Meshed, and would arrive either that night or the next day with a train of from forty to sixty servants. To be overtaken by them in a place which afforded such scanty accommodation as this post-house would of course be very unpleasant. But I thought little about the probability of such an event; on the contrary, I made myself and my weary beast as comfortable as I could. As the fire began to burn brightly on the hearth, and the tea steamed in the teacup, I forgot the cold I had so lately endured, and all thoughts of any disturbance of my rest, while I listened with satisfaction to the shrill whistling of rude Boreas without, who seemed to wish to keep me awake in my warm shelter,

now that he could do me no further harm. After I had drunk the tea, I began to feel an agreeable warmth pervading all my limbs, and proceeded to divest myself of my clothes. I had flung myself upon my couch, my pilau and roast fowl were almost ready, when about midnight I heard through the howling of the wind the clatter of horses' hoofs. I had scarcely time to spring up in my bed before the whole cavalcade swept into the court with clashing arms, imprecations, and shouts. In a moment they were before my door, which was of course bolted. "Hollo! Who's here? Out with you! The lady of Sipeh Salar, a princess of royal blood, is come. Every one must turn out and make room for her." The reader will easily understand that I did not at once open the door. The troopers asked of the post-master who was the occupier of the room, and hearing that it was only a Hadji, and he too a Sunnite, a heretic, they began to storm the door with their swords and the butt ends of their guns, crying: "Ha! Hadji! take thyself off, or wilt thou that we grind thy bones to meal!"

The moment was a critical, a very critical one. It is but a sorry jest to leave a warm shelter where one is perfectly comfortable, and to have to pass a bitterly cold winter's night in the open air. It was perhaps not so much the fear of evil consequences as the suddenness of the surprise and the disturbance which suggested to me the daring thought not to give way, but boldly to accept the challenge. My Tartar, who was in the room with me, grew pale. I sprang from my seat, seized sword and gun, while I handed my pistols to him, with the order to use them as soon as I gave him a sign. I then posted myself by the door, with the firm resolve to shoot down the first who forced their way in. My conduct seemed to have been observed by those without, for they began to negotiate. Indeed, I remarked that the elegance of the Persian which I used in the conversation with them made them suspect that they were after all wrong in their idea that I was a Bokhariot. "Who art thou, then? Speak, man, it seems thou art no Hadji," was now heard from without. "Who talks about Hadjis?" I cried: "away with that abusive word! I am neither Bokhariot nor Persian. I have the honour to be an European, and am called Vámbéry Sahib."

A pause followed this speech of mine. My assailants seemed to be dumbfounded. Its effect was, however, even greater on my Tartar, who now, for the first time, heard from the lips of his Hadji fellow-traveller, whom he had hitherto considered a true Mussulman, his real name. Pale as death, and with eyes opened wide, he stared upon me. I was in fact between two fires. A sharp side glance restored his equanimity. The Persians too altered their tone. The name European, that word of terror for Orientals, had an electrical effect. Terms of abuse were changed to expressions of politeness; threats to entreaties; and, as they earnestly implored me to admit two of the principal members of the escort, while the rest would content themselves with the barn and the stable, I opened the door to the trembling Persians. My features showed them at once the truth of my assertions. Our conversation became more and more lively and friendly, and in half an hour my guests lay retired in a corner of the room, completely overcome with arrack. There they lay and spored like horses. I then had to enter into

explanations with my Tartar. The good fellow received them very well. When the next morning I left the frosty hills, and rode over the cheerful plain of Damgan, I shuddered at the remembrance of the adventure, nor shall I easily forget my night's quarters at Ahuan.

Damgan is supposed to be the ancient Hecatompylæ (city with the hundred gates); a supposition which our archæologists will maintain with might and main, although the neighbourhood affords no vestige of a city to which the hundred gates might have belonged. Of course one must make large deductions from all assertions made by either Greeks or Persians, who rival each other in the noble arts of bragging and puffing. From the hundred gates let us subtract eighty, and it will even then be difficult to discover a city of twenty gates in the inconsiderable spot now called Damgan. The place can have scarcely more than a hundred houses, and two miserable caravanserais in the midst of its empty bazaar, testify clearly enough that in commercial respects it is by no means so important as is generally supposed.

The English traveller Fraser regretted that nobody could explain to him the puzzling inscription "Tchihl duleteran" (forty virgins) or "Tchihl seran" (forty heads), which is to be seen on a monument here. Forty is a holy number among the Mohammedans, especially among the Persians, and the "Tchihl tero" (the forty men), whom Moses, according to the Mohammedan legend, first slew and then recalled to life, are to be found commemorated in many places. What is here remarkable is that the ladies are here represented as saints or martyrs; a phenomenon not so striking at Cologne as here at Damgan, whose women do not enjoy the fairest fame.

From Damgan I travelled over two stations to Simnan, celebrated for its cotton, and still more for its tea-cakes. Almost every town in Persia has a *specialité*, in the production of which it boasts not only to be the first in Persia, but unrivalled in the whole world. Shiraz, for instance, is famous for lamb, Ispahan for peaches, Nathenz for pears, and so on. The curious thing is, that, on arriving in any one of these towns and inquiring after the article which is so extravagantly praised, the traveller either finds it very bad, or, what is more amusing, does not succeed in finding it at all. Now I had heard of the tea-cakes of Simnan in Meshed, nay, even in Herat. As, however, I had often had occasion to observe the above-mentioned phenomenon, I did not expect great things. Notwithstanding, I went into the bazaar to inquire after tea-cakes. After a long search I did succeed in procuring a few mouldy specimens. "Simnan," said one, "is justly celebrated for this article; but the fact is that the export is so great, that none are left for ourselves." Another said, "It is true that Simnan was once celebrated for this article, but the badness of the times has caused even the tea-cakes to deteriorate." Here at any rate people had the grace to make apologies and excuses, but in most places the lie appeared in all its naked deformity.

From hence the road goes through Lazgird, Dehneemek, and Kishlak, and the celebrated Khavar Pass to Teheran. This mountain road is supposed to be the same as the ancient Caspiæ Pylæ, and is certainly unique in its way. Cut out through high black walls of rock, it is exceedingly romantic, and its

sudden turns and frequent windings afford excellent lurking-places for robbers. As was the case in former days, so also now the neighbourhood abounds with highwaymen. Particular rocks have such names attached to them as, for instance, Soulburner, Fathermurderer, and the like. The powerful echo makes the road still more trying to the traveller's nerves. I saw fear plainly charactered on my Tartar's face. I rode with my weapons in readiness, and on the way encountered several persons of suspicious appearance. We were however unmolested, and at length breathed more freely as we rode through the further end of the pass into the broad fertile plain of Veramin. This plain, at the northern extremity of which stood the city Rages, renowned in ancient story, must have once been covered with flourishing cities and villages. Since that time many a fierce people, many a wild horde from Tartary, from Arabia, from the northern frontier of India, have made it the scene of their ravages. Even in the beginning of the middle ages Rages was a valuable prize. Here many of the Seljukians, the Ghuznevites, and the Timurides, rested themselves awhile in their careers of war and conquest. Now everything is in ruins. The European archæologist seeks for inscriptions among its fallen stones, while the Persian regards its plain as a valuable hunting-ground. Indeed, were it not for the numerous subterranean aqueducts, which testify to long-past civilization and prosperity, the stories of the former glories of Veramin would be looked upon as idle tales.

The same feelings which filled my breast on my arrival at Meshed, now awoke again within me with still greater force, as I drew near to Teheran, the starting-point of my adventurous journey, the place in which I had so many friends who already thought me launched into eternity. In order to hasten our march, I determined to accomplish the two last stations in one day. A ride of thirteen hours is, to be sure, very fatiguing, thought I to myself, but then I shall get to a station where I can rest for two whole months. So I rocked myself in the sweetest hopes, and rode stoutly forward from early morning till late in the evening. As the sun was sinking beneath the horizon, its last rays lit up the gleaming cupola of Shah Abdul Asire, and I saw in the distance Teheran. To this day I do not know whether it was excess of joy or the sudden approach of darkness—which in that clime and season comes on very quickly—or extreme fatigue, which bewildered my senses and caused me to lose my way. Whatever may have been the reason of it, I did lose my way in the immediate vicinity of the Persian capital, and not far from those famous ruins which stand close to the rocks on which the Guebres or fireworshippers were wont to expose their dead to be eaten by birds. For two hours I wandered about ditches and swamps, in which my horse once plunged up to the loins in cold water. Then again we got entangled among gardens and enclosures, until at last, late in the night, I succeeded in getting back to the right road.

But is it not remarkable that during my whole journey no mishap befel me? Unharméd I had roamed in distant and pathless deserts; in the midst of most dangerous adventures I had been able to preserve my property, and above all to keep safe and dry my manuscripts, the precious booty acquired by so many toils;—and yet here, on the very threshold of my house of

rest, in the very entrance to the harbour of refuge, a misfortune befel me which I can never forget, as through my immersion I lost one of those same precious manuscripts? Yes, the Oriental is right when he says that Fate has whims, and it is childish to attempt to contend with them.

When at last I reached the gates of Teheran, they were already closed, so that I was forced to pass the night in one of the caravanserais outside. As the next morning I rode through the crowded bazaar, amid curses and clamour, I heard many a Persian observe with anger and surprise—"Is not that a daring Bokhariot?" I also encountered on my way several Europeans, who at first failed to recognize me in my disguise, but later received me with open arms. I soon arrived at the gate of the Turkish embassy; and who can describe my joy at again finding the same places, the same friends whom I had left ten months before, full of such vague and adventurous plans? Those friends had then regarded me as advancing towards certain destruction, and at the time of my return they supposed me to have fallen a victim to the treachery and cruelty of Central Asia.

ARMINIUS VÁMBÉRY.



THEATRES AND MUSIC HALLS.

THOSE readers of the *Argosy* who have happened to cast their eyes upon previous papers of mine will not suppose that I am at all dependent upon "Harry Clifton," or the "Great Vance," or the "Inimitable Mackney," for the amusement of my leisure, or that I can be interested, except as a student of human nature, in songs like "Pretty Little Sarah," "Paddle your Own Canoe," or in any of the songs sung at third-rate music-halls, with titles very much like the titles I meet with in turning over music-books of the time of the Regency—such as "Go it, if it kills you," "Widow Waddle's Jig," "Betsy's Delight," or "Carlton House in a Bustle,"—from which I infer that the tastes of the lower music-hall public are not very unlike the tastes of the "fashionable" public before I was born. But, precisely because I cannot be supposed to have any personal interest in the subject, I may the more safely take up, in a passing way, a question which will some day have historic interest, and emphasize, by anecdote and comment, words of toleration and faith in human nature which, during the ten years for which I have been writing, I have never lost an opportunity of speaking, with various applications.

Necessities of space compel the omission here of a discussion of the place and function of Art in great cities. In that discussion, however, I have taken, for purposes of illustration, the ballet (it is always best to take the bull by the horns), which is the most soundly abused of all entertainments, and, after allowing for the very worst thing that the least amenable of critics can have to say, I find myself compelled in fairness, to judge of public entertainments in which there is one grain of Art, on principles which are chiefly these:—

I. The function of Art is to chasten, while delighting, by a symmetrical reflection of the play of human passion, ever ascending into the sphere of emotion.

II. By presenting Beauty and Order as ends to be sought for their own sake, Art, though not moral, allies itself with Duty.

III. Therefore, so long as Art continues faithful to Beauty, it cannot, of itself, be inimical to Morality.

IV. The moment Art ceases to be beautiful, it becomes powerless to give delight; it can then only confer pleasure, which can be had better and cheaper without Art.

V. Under those circumstances, any exhibition claiming to be artistic will chiefly attract pleasure-seekers.

VI. These pleasure-seekers would, under any circumstances, find their pleasure; *so that the grain of Art which the exhibition may hold in suspension is so much to the good.*

I cannot help it (for the present) if there appears an almost ludicrous remoteness in the application of these hints to an imminent public question, the decision of which cannot fail to be a landmark in the history of civilized freedom. The question is just now fought as a free-trade question, but no such phraseology can really cover the ground of the battle, though, for the present (1866) the commercial aspect of the matter comes to the front. Freedom of trade is the only kind of freedom which the multitude of men can be got to understand at present; and much suffering and degradation grow out of that limited intelligence of theirs. We must continue to do the best we can and lift up the first flag that comes handy (and this flag has a prestige about it, besides being handy)—for the battle will not wait; but in the meanwhile we need not be unheeding of larger, remoter issues than any which the flag of free-trade covers. Free trade, free religion, free art, and free self-culture are all bound up in the same bundle, and stand or fall together. Our present concern is with a question of free art and free trade combined.

In the capital of England, where the Court is situated, Theatres and Plays, considered as actable, exist, in the last resort, by sufferance of a quasi-public functionary, the Lord Chamberlain; who has been gaily, and not without cause (as we shall see) called the Lord Chambermaid. He may refuse his license to any play, or any theatre—therefore, to every play, and every theatre: an absurd, but not abstractly inconceivable result. The Lord Chamberlain and his assistants may be, and sometimes are, sensible and cultivated persons,* but the function personified is what I speak of, and it is one of the least credible anomalies of modern times. The Lord Chamberlain, then, is a lineal descendant of the Master of the Revels: is a relic of the days when masques and plays were in the first instance a kind of privilege of the Court, and a functionary was supposed to be necessary, to see that nothing “unhandsome” came “betwixt the wind” and the “nobility.” The vulgar might have may-poles and dancing bears, and conjuring and tumbling, but the drama was not for them—except as Lazarus might gather scraps at the door of Dives.

* Lord Sydney and Mr. Donne (the Examiners of Plays) are gentlemen of liberal feeling and high culture.

In the play-bills of the old patent theatres (Drury Lane and Covent Garden) the actors still describe themselves as (his or) her Majesty's servants, and seriously-disposed justices of the peace in the provinces still look upon actors as vagabonds and sturdy beggars. Great changes have arisen in dramatic matters since the two largest theatres lost their patents, but the Lord Chamberlain still remains, retaining and exercising his authority, though at the moment at which I write, another change is evidently breaking upon the horizon of dramatic and quasi-dramatic entertainment.

Meanwhile, there is something almost too absurd for contemplation in the exercise of certain functions by the Lord Chamberlain. Somebody writes, for example, to inform him that, in the somebody's opinion, the skirts of the ballet-girls at some particular theatre are too short. His Lordship (I suppose) goes, or sends, to see, and then forwards an intimation to the director of the theatre that his young ladies must wear longer dresses. They manage these things worse in France,* (I have in my mind, while writing, a certain police regulation about the Cancan); but I should think Englishmen can scarcely endure the image of an elderly gentleman whose duty it is to see that the tunics of English girls are long enough; or that they have the regulation "skirt-tacks." Pray let us have a public Chambermaid for these purposes—if they can be supposed matters for any public functionary whatever. For my part, I hold them to be matters of public sentiment. "With no one to embody it?" With no one *legally constituted* to embody it. I believe public sentiment, left to itself, will always, in such matters, create a police of good understanding which cannot be evaded; while the police of a function can be and is evaded; the growth of sound sentiment being moreover retarded by the mere fact of the function's existence. There is ample proof that the mischiefs aimed at, for example, by Lord Campbell's Act, are much increased by the existence of the Act.

However, to return. Between the Act of Parliament which undertakes (we all know what queer things Acts of Parliament *do* undertake, and they will undertake queerer things still as more mediocrities find their way into the House of Commons) to define a stage play, and the Lord Chamberlain's exercise of his functions, a difficulty has arisen which, from its relations, historic and philosophical, is worthy of deliberate notice.

In the time of Shakspeare, I have read that gallants smoked and refreshed themselves at the theatres just as they pleased. The habits of the Germans we all know, though I am not aware that, except at the "summer" theatres, there is smoking in theatres even in Germany. As it so happens that I am constitutionally intolerant of tobacco in any shape, I have personally no desire (but very much the reverse) that people should ever smoke in the theatres of my own country. But I stand for justice—to everybody. The habits of the English people, the masses, are no secret. They like smoking; they like eating and drinking; they have no notion of amusement without them. A small tradesman and his wife going from Chelsea to Gravesend on board

* Let me say here, that I blush to the quick for some of my *confrères*—who go to Paris and come back imperialised. We are perpetually pestered with what they do "in Paris." But who cares what they do "in Paris?"

a Thames steamer, begin to smoke, sip, and skin shrimps almost as soon as the paddle-wheels are in motion. We also know (though one is surprised to see how many well-informed people underrate it) the fondness of "the common people" for singing and music—especially in company. Now, in our own day, every kind of amusement is provided on competitive and commercial principles, and paid for, to be enjoyed in masses,* and my reader does not want another word to lead him up to those strange places, called Music-halls. Where or how the discrepancy first arose, or how it grew to its present size, is another question; but the fact is, that the half-cultivated population of our great cities who want amusement has enormously increased, while the drama has not overtaken their tastes, though, for the drama itself, there is still a sufficient and a largely increased public. However, the "Music-halls" all over the kingdom are filled nightly with multitudes of men and women, who, while the singing or dancing proceeds upon the stage, sit at tables or lounge about, munching, drinking, smoking, chattering, laughing,—monster convivial parties, in fact, held in public, the guests being about as much known to each other as the guests at hundreds of "distinguished" balls or "receptions" in a London season. The audiences, of course, are as miscellaneous as possible, and widely different in different parts of London and the provinces. In one quarter you have a preponderance of the small tradesman and artisan element; but there is always, of course, a large infusion of the pleasure-seeking population of great cities. You cannot expect to go to any such place without being brought face to face with the abandonment of youth, eager for "pleasure;" nor can the least felicitous concomitant of the scene blot out the *grace* of youth. Being blind to nothing, I must still say that merely as a show of animal spirits and young blood, I think a place like the Alhambra a splendid spectacle. I happened to be there on the night of the Oxford and Cambridge boat-race, when there was, I suppose, a much larger sprinkling than usual of the best youth of England: and I was powerfully moved by the beauty of the young men's faces. I was there for some hours, moving about, watching, and listening, and whatever I saw that I wished away, I left the place proud of my country. And let me entreat the reader to remember that good people have too often an exaggerating pruriency of their own, which makes them quite unjust to mixed assemblies of human beings whose object is distinctly "pleasure." Their budgets of "depravity" will not really bear handling. Things are quite bad enough, but their pathetic nonsense will seldom stand cross-examination. In a parliamentary committee which sat some years ago upon public-houses, a witness, speaking of a certain Saloon, said he could not describe to the committee the scenes which he had witnessed there. This answer I once found quoted in a magazine article by an accomplished lady who was criticising in a very noble and beautiful spirit the impurities of certain by-paths of modern life. This "sensation" answer had evidently struck her mind with horror; but what are the facts? The witness in question was asked at a later period of his examination to explain what he meant by not being able to describe the "scenes" he had witnessed. His reply was, that

* I have elsewhere expressed my regret that this should be so; but it is not to be helped. Above all it is not to be hindered by any act of injustice.

the character and variety of the entertainments were such as he could not describe! And how many old-bogie stories of the sort break down in a similar way when rigorously handled. Can anything be more absurd than what the terrified pruriency of very well-meaning people figures to itself about what "goes on" (that is a favourite phrase, *goes on*—it is so deliciously mysterious!) "behind the scenes," or the "depravity" of the ballet-girls? It is useless to disguise the fact that the scene *behind* the scene to an unaccustomed eye is full of piquancy. It cannot be unamusing, for example, to come close to half a dozen women in short muslin clouds, laughing and chattering—the usual innocent chatter of women; or to exchange civilities with a lithe young creature of nineteen, whom you never saw before and will never see again, with her bright curls gathered up close round her little neck, in the dress of a (stage) fairy prince, or a (stage) Watteau shepherd. There is piquancy in this, as there is in smelling a rose or drinking a glass of wine, or walking up Regent-street in the season on a fine afternoon. But the piquancy does not, with ordinary human beings, survive use; and the closer one gets to any class of one's fellow-creatures the more one is struck by their resemblance to each other, and the great excess of what is good and loveable over what is not. The prurient good people think with horror of the "orgies" or "saturnalia" that "go on" behind the unconscious curtain. Drop them down suddenly in the midst of stage "business," and they would be astonished to find that actresses are very much like their own sisters, and that visitors must—get out of the way. Again let me say there is no disguising the piquancy of the scene to certain people—but they are *not* the people who would go behind the scenes, expecting to find orgies or saturnalia there, any more than they are people who think a thunderbolt ought to fall because a young girl in a short tunic stands "chaffing" a stage-carpenter for a moment.

In dealing with any class of human beings of whom we know but little, we *must* begin by dropping the old-bogie way of thinking of them, if we want to get at the truth. For my part, I repeat, I am not blind to the worst that can be said upon such matters, and when that worst is allowed for, I maintain that the good of the whole case is greater than the evil, and that these are matters in which we have, above all things, to begin by being just. We shall never better our fellow-creatures if we commence by looking at them through the cloud of an old-bogie sensibility.

It so happens that another illustration of this subject is ready to my hand. I had once myself, along with most people, a very exaggerated idea of the amount of drinking that goes on at these "music-halls." But after taking pains to observe and to inquire, I am satisfied that the total amount of what is spent in eating, drinking, and cigars is quite inconsiderable. Great stress is laid, by those who know the habits of the working and small trading classes, upon the fact that the wife is very often the companion of the husband at these places—keeping him, it is suggested, out of mischief. On the other hand, no doubt, some wives may learn to drink themselves at such places. But, on the whole, these monstrous *symposia* of the "people" point to changes in our manners which, after a time, will prove to be for the better.

The chief difficulty lying in the way of any such change is the indifferent, or positively bad quality, of the entertainment given at the Music-halls. And so long as the Theatre proper is "protected," how can we throw stones at the Music-halls? They cannot give a dialogue, or a ballet with a story in it, without serious risk, as the law stands. The utter absurdity of restricting an entertainment to dumb show, or singing in evening-dress, and then wondering that the audience contains elements which are not of the choicest, is surely patent. For the discussion of the question of "privilege" I have no patience. To permit *any* people, *any* where, performing a play at their own risk, and in their own way, is part of a policy for which there are no words of scorn strong enough. Let us not lose our temper over the subject, or over that of the function of the Lord Chamberlain. A play is, of all things, that which is most openly submitted to public opinion, and most rapidly and decisively judged by it. A book, if it is bad, may have dropped poison into a thousand hearts before anybody points it out, and even then it cannot be recalled from the hands of those who have bought it. But a play is submitted at once to the criticism of two thousand people of average character and intelligence, and is liable to be "damned" in an hour. If the Lord Chamberlain is less critical than the average audience, he is worse than useless; if he is only *as* critical, he is a cipher; if he were more critical, his judgments could not be enforced. He is a simple absurdity. Those who think he is useful in the interests of public virtue must deal with the three alternatives just put, or, if they prefer it, they may deal with Milton's scornful retort upon a similar point—"Public virtue! public folly, rather—for who *shall* judge of public virtue?"

I should be very glad if words of mine could help to induce others to look without prejudice upon the coarseness of the audiences, and the entertainments, at some of the fifth-rate places of amusement in great cities. My own habits are those of a very quiet, studious person; I have delicate health, and fastidious senses—and yet I can tolerate, and with amused interest, a great deal from which some very good people turn harshly away. At the "Bower Saloon," Stangate, Westminster, I have witnessed a drama called, in the bill of the play,

"THE HUNGRY SON,

"OR,

"THE DREADFUL EFFECTS OF FAMILY HATRED CARRIED ON TOO LONG;"

but I also saw once, and with pleasure, a girl act Hamlet there. And very creditably she did it too, although she was so ignorant that in the great soliloquy she said "sickled" for "sicklied." On this occasion, the house was so crowded that the gallery audience overflowed on to the sloping roofs of the boxes, and there was a ring of naked, shoeless legs dangling in pairs over the heads of the indignant dress-circle. Indeed, the excitement of the people was so great (excusably, for Miss G—— was the only lady Hamlet I had then ever heard of, though Miss Marriott has acted Hamlet since) that a disturbance appeared imminent at one time of the evening. However, the Polonius of the

tragedy, Mr. B——, came before the drop-scene between the acts, and made an angry speech, of which I caught a few words,—“ policeman at the door one of you got a week the other day disgrace the savages in the backwoods” The remainder was lost in a storm of applause, and order was restored for the rest of the evening. Generally speaking the behaviour of the people at third-rate and fifth-rate places of amusement has almost incredibly improved within the last six or eight years. I have been present at performances at the east-end theatres,* and at the Victoria Theatre in the south, without being able to hear one word of what the actors said. But all this is now changed. It is true you may still see in the pit of a second-rate theatre (at the Surrey you may see it) such a thing as a placard in which “Persons are requested not to crack nuts during the performance;” and there may be an occasional squabble, and a cry for “the Bobbies” (vulgar for policemen); but that is the worst that happens. Monday night and Saturday night are, of course, always noisy nights; on Friday (the “order” night) the audience is not so “genteel;” and, of course, at holiday-times the sovereign “people” have it a good deal their own way. I was in the pit of a third-rate theatre on Boxing-night, 1865. It was an hour’s work to get in, and I had to stand all the time, wedged in between two women and two or three men, who talked incessantly, and in the coarsest conceivable vein. The roughs in the place, men and women, joined in the chorus of one of the songs imported from the Music-halls into the pantomime (“Free-and-Easy” is the name of the song), and the “swells” in the stalls stood up and turned their backs on the stage to applaud the chanting roughs. I do not think the conversational license taken by men and women of “the common people” at inferior theatres at all exceeds that taken in private boxes at first-class theatres; though, of course, talking in the body of the place is more objectionable to *listeners*, and the *tournure* of the phrases is not so elegant. Let me take the liberty of supposing that you are in the pit of a fifth-rate theatre, and listening to what goes on behind you or at your side, where there is a household party—a tradesman, his wife, a friend of the family, and his sweetheart. This is the kind of thing you might hear, as a “comic” actor came forward with an absurd make-up:—

First Gentleman.—Oh! golley; aint he a reg’lar Cure!

His wife.—Now, then, Joe-in-the-copper, speak up; will you?

Second Gentleman.—Gawdstruth,† aint he a bubblyjock!

Sweetheart.—Oh my, jiminy! he *is* a head o’ cauliflower!

This is not edifying; but you can well believe in the solid virtues of people who are capable of such felicities. By-and-by the conversation is resumed:—

* It has little to do with the subject, but I may perhaps be allowed to express my surprise that people are still found who risk opera at theatres in the south of London, where it is always a dead failure. In the east, it is a success; because there are so many Jews living there. I have heard *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore* at the Standard Theatre, and have been surprised, as well as amused, at the keen criticism of the pit upon the performance.

† This adjuration is, in nine cases out of ten, employed by the poor with no more idea of the meaning than they would have of the meaning of ‘sounds.

Second Gentleman.—Have you seen Ovinia * Jones—*East Lynne*?

Sweetheart.—No; not yet.

Second Gentleman.—Ah, you've got to, I can tell you! I cried like a water-cart when the kid dies—it is cutting, I can tell you!

Mamma.—Ropes of inions?

Gentleman.—Ah, it *is* inions, that is!

Sweetheart.—I s'pose it's a very deep tragedy? [*Spoken with critical gravity, the present writer having somehow betrayed that he is listening*].

Gentleman.—(*Evading the high-art question*). I ain't cried so much—not since I see *Belphegor*. I'll take you to see her.

This is delivered with an air of patronage which would not disgrace a Sultan; and then the happy pair fall to upon their provisions, and flakes of piecrust fall, like rose-leaves, at the feet of the lovers as they munch. Some commonplace question is asked of me, which I answer with civility, and then, rising to depart, I have the satisfaction of hearing myself called, in a whisper, "a affable gent."

Some years ago I went one night to a place of cheap entertainment called the Rotunda, in the Blackfriars-road, near the bridge. It is now, I believe, a fire-stove shop, the little circus having been put down as a nuisance; but I lay no stress upon *that* fact, for the ordinary, respectable Englishman, especially the English shopkeeper, calls nearly everything unusual a nuisance, and particularly anything that gathers a mob of roughs together. That roughs frequented this Rotunda I know, for I saw and heard them "roughing" on the night of my visit, and I do not doubt that thieves and ill-conditioned people of all sorts were there; but the audience behaved as well as any audience could possibly behave, and one could hardly help being glad at heart to see them sitting there so quietly, out of mischief for the time, and getting the benefit of even so low a form of art. There was solo singing in "character" (a cobbler, a Scotchman, an Irishman, very coarse, but with no real harm about either the song or the characterization), solo dancing, a rope performance, and a *ballet d'action*. A *ballet d'action*—that is to say, a ballet in which there is a story, as distinguished from a *ballet divertissement*, in which there is (supposed to be) none—is illegal; but my friends of the Rotunda evidently thought they were keeping sufficiently to windward of the law by avoiding dialogue, for the story of this ballet was told in the most undisguised manner by the mere action; though, for the assistance of slack wits, it was told in black and white also. The stage-manager, at every turn of the plot, held up in front of the stage a placard to say what was happening, as—

or— SHE IS JEALOUS,
HE ENLISTS FOR A SOLDIER,
or— THEY ARE TO BE MARRIED TO-MORROW.

* This is vulgar for Miss Avonia Jones. I need not say that it is impossible for "the common people" not to alter a name. They turn Reynolds into Randles, Albert into Alibert, Nine Elms into Nine Ellums, Alexandra into Alexandria, omnibus into omnibus, and Westminster into Westminster. Who would grudge them a pleasure so innocent?

This last notification was received with tremendous applause. As is universally the case at the low-class theatres even more than at the better sort, I found the audience had their *old favourites*. A half-withered, moiled-looking woman of fifty odd, who danced in the ballet, was received and pursued with storms of clapping and compliment—"Condemn my sanguinary organs of vision! the old girl stuck to it, didn't she, Bill?" The performance closed with a little exhibition on the tight-rope, in which the clown, a quiet, decent, worn-looking man of about thirty, and his very lovely young wife took part. I shall never forget the exquisitely-turned limbs of this little woman. The rope on which she had to walk went straight across the pit until it attached itself to a fastening in the boxes, or gallery, so that this pretty creature had to walk clean over the heads of the people in the pit—over mine among the rest. Her husband, proud, I am sure, of her beauty, followed her transit with jealous eyes; but it was unnecessary. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*—it was a chivalric pit. As for me, I believe I was suspected of being a spy—though I hummed nigger tunes, jested with my neighbours, and looked as much like a blackguard as I possibly could, in order to disarm suspicion.

My success, however, was not satisfactory to my own mind; and the next time I visited a "gaff"—this was in Shoreditch—I sought, and obtained for the sum of fourpence, a private box all to myself. The premises were so confined that, in coming out, I lost my way, after having taken only a step or two, into somebody's back parlour, where there were plates and dishes set on a clean tablecloth, all ready for supper. There was no smell of cooking about, but that is nothing; the neighbourhood is a paradise of fried fish, baked potatoes, whelks, eels, cockles, mutton-pies, cranberry tarts, pig's trotters, and "faggots."* At this place there was no ballet. The audience was what you might expect. There were fiddlers, with a clarionet, a flute, and a piano in the very last stage of knockiness—every bit of baize having evidently been worn off the furrowed keys. This delicious instrument, retained perhaps for the purpose of giving a refined air to the entertainment, was feverishly played by a bald-headed, little old man, who had so respectable an appearance that I wondered how he had drifted into such a place. There were women there of all ages; and one pleasant-looking young creature in the very centre of the pit, with a babe held fast to her uncovered bosom. The mother had no ring on, but she had an innocent face,† and her presence did me good.

* I will not assume the responsibility of recommending any one to eat a faggot, but the *smell* is delicious. It is the night-policeman's joy! "Does your husband sleep, when he comes home at six in broad daylight?" said I to a policeman's wife, once. "Law, yes, sir," said she, "I stuffs a 'ankercher into the mug, to keep it hot, along with the gravy, and he has his faggit, and goes sound asleep as a church."

† She might have pawned her ring; but even if she had none to pawn, those of my readers who the most rigidly hold to the association of virtue and order, need not doubt that the woman's face was innocent. There are, or were, until quite recently, corners of London, where, as in some forest district in England, the essence of conjugal virtue exists, though the form and name are alien to the people's ideas. Now and then I am told a clergyman undertakes a *civilinade* into these retreats, and marries the willing couples; and I once heard an amusingly painful anecdote of a just-married mother of four children going and flaunting her newly-acquired "virtue" in the face of another

The first thing I heard from my private box was the then new song, "God bless the Prince of Wales!" The Prince had just been married, and the more distinctly loyal and affectionate parts of the song were soundly and, I undertake to say, sincerely applauded. Let me be excused for being sentimental enough to add that I was moved by the evident heartiness with which I saw these poor roughs—some of them pickpockets and drifted women—wished well to the marriage. The singers of the song were two—a young man, and a tall, stout woman, with highly-pomatumed hair, a wedding-ring and keeper, a silk gown fixed high in the neck with a large brooch, and a bunch of flowers in her hand—which was red and large with labour. This song was followed by others—the usual Irishman, Scotchman, and what not. Then came what the Music-hall people will persist in calling a duologue.* Two men, one representing Gutta Percha, and the other Leather, had a sort of sham fight, mixed up with tumbling, singing, and banter, the victory always leaning to the side of Leather, which greatly delighted the audience. I need not say that all this was to me very tedious buffoonery; but though some of the jokes were unquestionable *doubles entendres*, as gross as any in Shakspeare, I really lay no particular stress upon the fact as an index of *character*. Humour must always turn on things in which there is a quick and easy common understanding, and what those things are which most readily present themselves to the mind of the humorist depends on culture. Even this low humour had an infinitesimal grain of art in it, and, honestly, I don't believe the people were measurably better or measurably worse for listening to it; and I am satisfied that the majority of the women, in this audience as in others, did not "take" the jokes. It is the silly conceit of men, rather than any real depravity of instinct, which makes them find anything to enjoy in this garbage. However, after this "comic" singing had been continued till I was very sick indeed, the audience began impatiently to stamp, clap, whistle, and shriek out some word which I could not catch. Who was the traveller that has recorded his bewilderment at some Paris theatre when he heard everybody calling out, *Ree-cat! Ree-cat!* This (as some readers may guess) turned out to be clipped French for *Henri Quatre*; but no bewilderment could exceed that of the gentleman in the private box, when every voice in this "gaff" seemed to him to be shouting "Cræsus!" What on earth could the people mean by this classical reference? My wonder soon ceased, when a gentleman, who was hailed with the greatest enthusiasm, came on to the stage and began to sing a song called "Water-Cresses." This gave unspeakable delight, the audience making up a chorus at the end of each verse, thus—

"She promised for to marry me, upon the first of May,
With a gold ring and a bunch of watercreases!"

At the close of this entertainment the place was cleared, and after a short

mother of a family—not yet married—who had nursed the other lady through a long illness, and pawned her flat-irons to help her. The ungrateful lady was hustled for her pains by some of the other ladies, and in the evening there were a few fights got up among the gentlemen—chiefly bricklayers' labourers—on this great public question.

* There is no such word as this, which is a jumble of Greek and Latin.

time, a second audience admitted to a repetition of the programme, or something fresh. In this manner such places are made to pay.

The audiences at the better-class Theatres and Music-halls stand related to audiences such as I have been speaking of, as the people at a west-end club to the people in a beer-house parlour. Upon all this I would merely found an *à fortiori* argument in favour of the removal of all restraint but police restraint, such as is exercised in the next street, from places of public entertainment in which the common standards of decency are maintained. In these matters, as in all others, the nursing or protective policy applied in one direction, and the exclusive policy applied in another, are found to have the usual results. The "protected" entertainment degenerates in quality, and actually fetches "attractions" from the "unprotected." The staple of the thing now called a burlesque or extravaganza, consists, positively, of grotesque singing and dances imported from the Music-halls into the Theatres. The Theatre prevents the Music-hall from attempting to give anything like a dramatic entertainment. The Music-hall gets up these singing grotesqueries because it must do something lively, and then it is avenged upon its "protected" enemy by the policy of imitation which the latter is forced to adopt. Really it is a ridiculous piece of business.

Probably I shall not be expected to go out of my way to observe that neither at Theatres nor at Music-halls do I find what appears to me most desirable in the way of popular entertainment. But everywhere I find more to hope than to fear. I wish, indeed, I could expect, in small compass, to express my deep sense of the social importance of mixed assemblies, in which people of all classes, out of jails and bedlams, are permitted to meet together for some common purpose, under no restraints but those of police. The tone of mixed assemblies, taken as wholes, is always so much higher than the tone of their lower elements, that they are among the most efficacious instruments of education in manners. The very coarsest put on their "best behaviour" before strangers; and so the habit of self-restraint is begun. When the very worst has been said for the very worst assembly of people that could be got together, it still remains true that all classes of people have a right to meet and amuse themselves in their own way. The better the amusements they choose, the more they will be benefited—we need not waste words over truisms; but our first duty is to leave them their choice. This, at all events, is a lesson in fair dealing—if we accompany our non-interference by an expression of opinion that their choice might be better. The prime duty, here as elsewhere, is to be simply just. If we strive to be just, we shall not miss our reward. I never came away from any assembly of my fellow-creatures, gathered together to partake of an entertainment in common, without feeling my faith in human nature raised, without a deep triumphing sense how much the good exceeds the bad, wherever men and women meet in large numbers together. Do you remember Sir Roger de Coverley at the play? "As soon as the house was full and the candles lighted, my old friend stood up and looked about him with that pleasure which a mind seasoned with humanity naturally feels in itself at the sight of a multitude of people who seem pleased with one another, and partake of the same common entertainment." I never go to a

place of amusement without seeing the ghost of the good old man standing up in the middle of the area.

For the sake of an argument *à fortiori* (which the reader will construe as kindly as he can), let me again speak for a moment of myself. No man can be more reticent in his personal habits, no man can have stronger convictions as to what is wrong or in bad taste at any place of public amusement, no man can be more deeply pledged by his antecedents and avowed principles to the "faith which Milton held," no man can possibly feel more acutely the incongruity between a speech of Imogen or Rosalind and the clinking of glasses in a half regardless crowd. But my likes and dislikes, my approvals and disapprovals, are no guides for others, and I commit the greatest possible wrong if I attempt to enforce them. You do not like the idea of Hamlet's soliloquy delivered in the midst of tobacco-smoke? No more do I. But who are you, pray? Somebody else *does* like it, and you have no more right to prevent his having it than you have to prevent his wearing a rose in his button-hole, or employing a doctor whom *you* think a quack. Nor is this all. There is no fact of the same mixed order for which such an overwhelming mass of evidence can be collected as the fact that all attempts to make laws for purposes of protection, nursing, or guidance, are worse than stultified; they are always *punished* by the event; and the people who are intended to be benefited are generally the greatest sufferers. So it was in the beginning, and so it will be for ever. The watchword of true progress is, Hands off! It proceeds by inducements, not by penalties; and only when unjust compulsion is removed does any work of real improvement begin. For my part, wherever the battle of freedom is fought, I fling myself into it; it does not matter how much there is of what is ugly on the side of those who are struggling; for the first condition of goodness is liberty. When we, who stand for justice, hear people say that the drama must be "protected," we reply, Nothing but *rights* shall be protected if we can help it—if people like to meet together and hear Mr. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Blair's *Sermons*, or Herbert's *Porch to the Temple*, read while they are eating and drinking, it is no business of anybody. For my part, to use the words of Macaulay in his speech on the Chapels Bill in the year 1844, I contend against the intolerance of these people now, in precisely the same spirit as that in which I should be ready, in case of need, to contend for their rights against intolerance from any other side; and I only wish we had a few more of the old-fashioned Liberals, like Mr. Locke and Mr. Clay, to fight in the same spirit.

MATTHEW BROWNE.





THE CUCKOO.

CUCKOO SONG.

O KITTY BELL, 'twas sweet, I swear,
 To wander in the spring together,
 When buds were blowing everywhere,
 And it was golden weather!
 And down the lanes beside the farm
 You roam'd beside me, tripping lightly,—
 Blushing you hung upon my arm,
 And the small gloved hand press'd tightly!
 And the orchis sprang
 In the scented meadow,
 And the throstle sang
 In the greenwood shadow;
 And your eyes were bright
 With happy dew,—
 Could I doubt a light
 So divinely blue
 When you kiss'd and sighed
 "I will be true?"
 Though far and wide
 The brown bird cried—

"Cuckoo!"

O Kitty Bell, the cry seem'd sweet,
 For you were kind, and flowers were springing;
 The dusty willow in the heat
 Its woolly bells were swinging,
 And round its boll the linnet brown
 Finish'd her nest with wool and feather,
 And we had thoughts of nestling down,
 In the farm by the mill, together;
 And over the hill
 The breeze was blowing,
 And the arms of the mill
 Kept coming and going;
 And who but Love
 Was between us two,
 When around and above
 The flittermice flew,
 And as night drew nigh,
 You swore to be true?
 And I heard the cry
 From woods hard by—

"Cuckoo!"

O Kitty Bell, 'tis spring again,
 But all the face of things looks iller;
 The nests are built in wood and lane,
 But you are nested with the miller
 And other lovers kiss and swear,
 While I look on in scorn and pity
 For "all," I cry, "is false and fair,"
 And curse the cuckoo and Kitty;
 And over the hill
 The breeze is blowing,
 And the arms of the mill
 Keep coming and going;
 And the hidden bird
 Is singing anew
 The warning I heard
 When I trusted you;
 And I sicken and sigh,
 With my heart thrill'd through,
 And wherever I fly
 I hear the cry—
 "Cuckoo!"

JOHN BANKS.

 LOTTA SCHMIDT.

AS all the world knows, the old fortifications of Vienna have been pulled down,—the fortifications which used to surround the centre or kernel of the city; and the vast spaces thus thrown open and forming a broad ring in the middle of the town have not as yet been completely filled up with those new buildings and gardens which are to be there, and which, when there, will join the outside city and the inside city together, so as to make them into one homogeneous whole. The work, however, is going on, and if the war which has come does not swallow everything appertaining to Austria into its maw, the ugly remnants of destruction will be soon carted away, and the old glacis will be made bright with broad pavements and gilded railings, and well-built lofty mansions and gardens beautiful with shrubs—and beautiful with turf also, if Austrian patience can make turf to grow beneath Austrian sky. But if the war that has now begun to rage is allowed to have its way, as most men think that it will, it does not require any wonderful prophet to foretell that Vienna will remain ugly, and that the dust of the brickbats will not be made altogether to disappear for another half century.

No sound of coming war had as yet been heard in Vienna in the days, not yet twelve months since, to which this story refers. On an evening of September, when there was still something left of daylight at eight o'clock, two girls were walking together in the Burgplatz, or large open space which

lies between the city palace of the Emperor and the gate which passes thence from the old town out to the new town. Here at present stand two bronze equestrian statues, one of the Archduke Charles, and the other of Prince Eugene. And they were standing there also, both of them, when these two girls were walking round them; but that of the Prince had not as yet been uncovered for the public. There was coming a great gala day in the city. Emperors and empresses, archdukes and grand-dukes, with their arch-duchesses and grand-duchesses, and princes and ministers, were to be there, and the new statue of Prince Eugene was to be submitted to the art critics of the world. There was very much thought at Vienna of the statue in those days. Well; since that the statue has been submitted to the art critics, and henceforward it will be thought of as little as any other huge bronze figure of a prince on horseback. A very ponderous prince is poised in an impossible position, on an enormous dray horse. But yet the thing is grand, and Vienna is so far a finer city in that it possesses the new equestrian statue of Prince Eugene.

"There will be such a crowd, Lotta," said the elder of the two girls, "that I will not attempt it. Besides, we shall have plenty of time for seeing it afterwards."

"Oh yes," said the younger girl, whose name was Lotta Schmidt; "of course we shall all have enough of the old prince for the rest of our lives; but I should like to see the grand people sitting up there on the benches; and there will be something nice in seeing the canopy drawn up. I think I shall come. Herr Crippel has said that he would bring me, and get me a place."

"I thought, Lotta, you had determined to have nothing more to say to Herr Crippel."

"I don't know what you mean by that. I like Herr Crippel very much, and he plays beautifully. Surely a girl may know a man old enough to be her father without having him thrown in her teeth as her lover."

"Not when the man old enough to be her father has asked her to be his wife twenty times, as Herr Crippel has asked you. Herr Crippel would not give up his holiday afternoon to you if he thought it was to be for nothing."

"There I think you are wrong, Marie. I believe Herr Crippel likes to have me with him simply because every gentleman likes to have a lady on such a day as that. Of course it is better than being alone. I don't suppose he will say a word to me except to tell me who the people are, and to give me a glass of beer when it is over."

It may be as well to explain at once, before we go any further, that Herr Crippel was a player on the violin, and that he led the musicians in the orchestra of the great beer-hall in the Volksgarten. Let it not be thought that because Herr Crippel exercised his art in a beer-hall therefore he was a musician of no account. No one will think so who has once gone to a Vienna beer-hall, and listened to such music as is there provided for the visitors.

The two girls, Marie Weber and Lotta Schmidt, belonged to an establishment in which gloves were sold in the Graben, and now, having completed

their work for the day,—and indeed their work for the week, for it was Saturday evening,—had come out for such recreation as the evening might afford them. And on behalf of these two girls, as to one of whom at least I am much interested, I must beg my English readers to remember that manners and customs differ much in Vienna from those which prevail in London. Were I to tell of two London shop girls going out into the streets after their day's work, to see what friends and what amusement the fortune of the evening might send to them, I should be supposed to be speaking of young women as to whom it would be better that I should be silent; but these girls in Vienna were doing simply that which all their friends would expect and wish them to do. That they should have some amusement to soften the rigours of long days of work was recognized to be necessary; and music, beer, dancing, with the conversation of young men, are thought in Vienna to be the natural amusements of young women, and in Vienna are believed to be innocent.

The Viennese girls are almost always attractive in their appearance, without often coming up to our English ideas of prettiness. Sometimes they do fully come up to our English idea of beauty. They are generally dark, tall, light in figure, with bright eyes, which are however very unlike the bright eyes of Italy and which constantly remind the traveller that his feet are carrying him eastward in Europe. But perhaps the peculiar characteristic in their faces which most strikes a stranger is a certain look of almost fierce independence, as though they had recognized the necessity, and also acquired the power of standing alone, and of protecting themselves. I know no young women by whom the assistance of a man's arm seems to be so seldom required as the young women of Vienna. They almost invariably dress well, generally preferring black, or colours that are very dark; and they wear hats that are I believe of Hungarian origin, very graceful in form, but which are peculiarly calculated to add something to that assumed savageness of independence of which I have spoken.

Both the girls who were walking in the Burgplatz were of the kind that I have attempted to describe. Marie Weber was older, and not so tall, and less attractive than her friend; but as her lot in life was fixed, and as she was engaged to marry a cutter of diamonds, I will not endeavour to interest the reader specially in her personal appearance. Lotta Schmidt was essentially a Viennese pretty girl of the special Viennese type. She was tall and slender, but still had none of that appearance of feminine weakness which is so common among us with girls who are tall and slim. She walked as though she had plenty both of strength and courage for all purposes of life without the assistance of any extraneous aid. Her hair was jet black, and very plentiful, and was worn in long curls which were brought round from the back of her head over her shoulders. Her eyes were blue,—dark blue,—and were clear and deep rather than bright. Her nose was well formed, but somewhat prominent, and made you think at the first glance of the tribes of Israel. But yet no observer of the physiognomy of races would believe for half a moment that Lotta Schmidt was a Jewess. Indeed, the type of form which I am endeavouring to describe is in truth as far removed from the

Jewish type as it is from the Italian ; and it has no connection whatever with that which we ordinarily conceive to be the German type. But, overriding everything in her personal appearance, in her form, countenance, and gait, was that singular fierceness of independence, as though she were constantly asserting that she would never submit herself to the inconvenience of feminine softness. And yet Lotta Schmidt was a simple girl, with a girl's heart, looking forward to find all that she was to have of human happiness in the love of some man, and expecting and hoping to do her duty in life as a married woman and the mother of a family. Nor would she have been at all coy in saying as much had the subject of her life's prospects become matter of conversation in any company ; no more than one lad would be coy in saying that he hoped to be a doctor, or another in declaring a wish for the army.

When the two girls had walked twice round the hoarding within which stood all those tons of bronze which were intended to represent Prince Eugene, they crossed over the centre of the Burgplatz, passed under the other equestrian statue, and came to the gate leading into the Volksgarten. There, just at the entrance, they were overtaken by a man with a fiddle-case under his arm, who raised his hat to them and then shook hands with both of them.

"Ladies," he said, "are you coming in to hear a little music? We will do our best."

"Herr Crippel always does well," said Marie Weber. "There is never any doubt when one comes to hear him."

"Marie, why do you flatter him?" said Lotta.

"I do not say half to his face that you said just now behind his back," said Marie.

"And what did she say of me behind my back?" said Herr Crippel. He smiled as he asked the question, or attempted to smile, but it was easy to see that he was much in earnest. He blushed up to his eyes, and there was a slight trembling motion in his hands as he stood with one of them pressed upon the other.

As Marie did not answer at the moment, Lotta replied for her.

"I will tell you what I said behind your back. I said that Herr Crippel had the firmest hand upon a bow, and the surest fingers among the strings in all Vienna,—when his mind was not wool-gathering. Marie, is not that true?"

"I do not remember anything about the wool-gathering," said Marie.

"I hope I shall not be wool-gathering to-night ; but I shall doubtless,—I shall doubtless,—for I shall be thinking of your judgment. Shall I get you seats at once? There ; you are just before me. You see I am not coward enough to fly from my critics." And he placed them to sit at a little marble table, not far from the front of the low orchestra in the foremost place in which he would have to take his stand.

"Many thanks, Herr Crippel," said Lotta. "I will make sure of a third chair, as a friend is coming."

"Oh, a friend!" said he ; and he looked sad, and all his sprightliness was gone.

"Marie's friend," said Lotta, laughing. "Do you not know Carl Stobel?"

Then the musician became bright and happy again. "I would have got two more chairs if you would have let me; one for the fraulein's sake, and one for his own. And I will come down presently, and you shall present me, if you will be so very kind."

Marie Weber smiled and thanked him, and declared that she should be very proud;—and the leader of the band went up into his place.

"I wish he had not placed us here," said Lotta.

"And why not?"

"Because Fritz is coming."

"No!"

"But he is."

"And why did you not tell me?"

"Because I did not wish to be speaking of him. Of course you understand why I did not tell you. I would rather it should seem that he came of his own account,—with Carl. Ha, ha!" Carl Stobel was the diamond-cutter to whom Marie Weber was betrothed. "I should not have told you now,—only that I am disarranged by what Herr Crippel has done."

"Had we not better go,—or at least move our seats? We can make any excuse afterwards."

"No," said Lotta. "I will not seem to run away from him. I have nothing to be ashamed of. If I choose to keep company with Fritz Planken, that should be nothing to Herr Crippel."

"But you might have told him."

"No; I could not tell him. And I am not sure Fritz is coming either. He said he would come with Carl if he had time. Never mind; let us be happy now. If a bad time comes by-and-by, we must make the best of it."

Then the music began, and, suddenly, as the first note of a fiddle was heard, every voice in the great beer-hall of the Volksgarten became silent. Men sat smoking, with their long beer-glasses before them, and women sat knitting, with their beer-glasses also before them, but not a word was spoken. The waiters went about with silent feet, but even orders for beer were not given, and money was not received. Herr Crippel did his best, working with his wand as carefully,—and I may say as accurately,—as a leader in a fashionable opera-house in London or Paris. But every now and then, in the course of the piece, he would place his fiddle to his shoulder and join in the performance. There was hardly one then in the hall, man or woman, boy or girl, who did not know, from personal knowledge and judgment, that Herr Crippel was doing his work very well.

"Excellent, was it not?" said Marie.

"Yes; he is a musician. Is it not a pity he should be so bald?" said Lotta.

"He is not so very bald," said Marie.

"I should not mind his being bald so much, if he did not try to cover his old head with the side hairs. If he would cut off those loose straggling locks, and declare himself to be bald at once, he would be ever so much better. He would look to be fifty then. He looks sixty now."

"What matters his age? He is forty-five, just; for I know. And he is a good man."

"What has his goodness to do with it?"

"A good deal. His old mother wants for nothing, and he makes two hundred florins a month. He has two shares in the summer theatre. I know it."

"Bah! what is all that when he will plaster his hair over his old bald head?"

"Lotta, I am ashamed of you." But at this moment the further expression of Marie's anger was stopped by the entrance of the diamond-cutter, and as he was alone, both the girls received him very pleasantly. We must give Lotta her due, and declare that, as things had gone, she would much prefer now that Fritz should stay away, though Fritz Planken was as handsome a young fellow as there was in Vienna, and one who dressed with the best taste, and danced so that no one could surpass him, and could speak French, and was confidential clerk at one of the largest hotels in Vienna, and was a young man acknowledged to be of much general importance,—and had, moreover, in plain language declared his love for Lotta Schmidt. But Lotta would not willingly give unnecessary pain to Herr Crippel, and she was generously glad when Carl Stobel, the diamond-cutter, came by himself. Then there was a second and third piece played, and after that Herr Crippel came down, according to promise, and was presented to Marie's lover.

"Ladies," said he, "I hope I have not gathered wool."

"You have surpassed yourself," said Lotta.

"At wool-gathering?" said Herr Crippel.

"At sending us out of this world into another," said Lotta.

"Ah; go into no other world but this," said Herr Crippel, "lest I should not be able to follow you." And then he went away again to his post.

Before another piece had been commenced, Lotta saw Fritz Planken enter the door. He stood for a moment gazing round the hall, with his cane in his hand and his hat on his head, looking for the party which he intended to join. Lotta did not say a word, nor would she turn her eyes towards him. She would not recognize him if it were possible to avoid it. But he soon saw her, and came up to the table at which they were sitting. When Lotta was getting the third chair for Marie's lover, Herr Crippel, in his gallantry, had brought a fourth, and now Fritz occupied the chair which the musician had placed there. Lotta, as she perceived this, was sorry that it should be so. She could not even dare to look up to see what effect this new arrival would have upon the leader of the band.

The new comer was certainly a handsome young man,—such a one as inflicts unutterable agonies on the hearts of the Herr Crippels of the world. His boots shone like mirrors, and fitted his feet like gloves. There was something in the make and sit of his trousers which Herr Crippel, looking at them as he could not help looking at them, was quite unable to understand. Even twenty years ago Herr Crippel's trousers, as Herr Crippel very well knew, had never looked like that. And Fritz Planken wore a blue frock coat with silk lining to the breast, which seemed to have come from some tailor among the gods. And he had on primrose gloves, and round his neck a bright pink satin handkerchief, joined by a ring, which gave a richness of colouring to the whole thing which nearly killed Herr Crippel, because

he could not but acknowledge that the colouring was good. And then the hat! And when the hat was taken off for a moment, then the hair—perfectly black, and silky as a raven's wing, just waving with one curl! And when Fritz put up his hand, and ran his fingers through his locks, their richness and plenty and beauty were conspicuous to all beholders. Herr Crippel, as he saw it, involuntarily dashed his hand up to his own pate, and scratched his straggling lanky hairs from off his head.

"You are coming to Sperl's to-morrow, of course," said Fritz to Lotta. Now Sperl's is a great establishment for dancing in the Leopoldstadt which is always open of a Sunday evening, and which Lotta Schmidt was in the habit of attending with much regularity. It was here she had become acquainted with Fritz. And certainly to dance with Fritz was to dance indeed! Lotta too was a beautiful dancer. To a Viennese such as Lotta Schmidt, dancing is a thing of serious importance. It was a misfortune to her to have to dance with a bad dancer, as it is to a great whist-player among us to sit down with a bad partner. Oh, what she had suffered more than once when Herr Crippel had induced her to stand up with him!

"Yes; I shall go. Marie, you will go?"

"I do not know," said Marie.

"You will make her go, Carl, will you not?" said Lotta.

"She promised me yesterday, as I understood," said Carl.

"Of course we will all be there," said Fritz, somewhat grandly; "and I will give a supper for four."

Then the music began again, and the eyes of all of them became fixed upon Herr Crippel. It was unfortunate that they should have been placed so fully before him, as it was impossible that he should avoid seeing them. As he stood up with his violin to his shoulders, his eyes were fixed on Fritz Planken, and Fritz Planken's boots, and coat, and hat, and hair. And as he drew his bow over the strings he was thinking of his own boots and of his own hair. Fritz was sitting, leaning forward in his chair, so that he could look up into Lotta's face, and he was playing with a little amber-headed cane, and every now and then he whispered a word. Herr Crippel could hardly play a note. In very truth he was wool-gathering. His hand became unsteady, and every instrument was more or less astray.

"Your old friend is making a mess of it to-night," said Fritz to Lotta. "I hope he has not taken a glass too much of schnaps."

"He never does anything of the kind," said Lotta, angrily. "He never did such a thing in his life."

"He is playing awfully badly," said Fritz.

"I never heard him play better in my life than he has played to-night," said Lotta.

"His hand is tired. He is getting old," said Fritz. Then Lotta moved her chair and drew herself back, and was determined that Marie and Carl should see that she was angry with her young lover. In the meantime the piece of music had been finished, and the audience had shown their sense of the performers' inferiority by withdrawing those plaudits which they were so ready to give when they were pleased.

After this some other musician led for a while, and then Herr Crippel had to come forward to play a solo. And on this occasion the violin was not to be his instrument. He was a great favourite among the lovers of music in Vienna, not only because he was good at the fiddle and because with his bow in his hand he could keep a band of musicians together, but also as a player on the zither. It was not often now-a-days that he would take his zither to the music-hall in the Volksgarten; for he would say that he had given up that instrument; that he now played it only in private; that it was not fit for a large hall, as a single voice, the scraping of a foot, would destroy its music. And Herr Crippel was a man who had his fancies and his fantasies, and would not always yield to entreaty. But occasionally he would send his zither down to the public hall; and in the programme for this evening it had been put forth that Herr Crippel's zither would be there and that Herr Crippel would perform. And now the zither was brought forward, and a chair was put for the zitherist, and Herr Crippel stood for a moment behind his chair and bowed. Lotta glanced up at him and could see that he was very pale. She could even see that the perspiration stood upon his brow. She knew that he was trembling and that he would have given almost his zither itself to be quit of his promised performance for that night. But she knew also that he would make the attempt.

"What, the zither?" said Fritz. "He will break down as sure as he is a living man."

"Let us hope not," said Carl Stobel.

"I love to hear him play the zither better than anything," said Lotta.

"It used to be very good," said Fritz; "but everybody says he has lost his touch. When a man has the slightest feeling of nervousness he is done for the zither."

"H—sh; let him have his chance at any rate," said Marie.

Reader, did you ever hear the zither? When played, as it is sometimes played in Vienna, it combines all the softest notes of the human voice. It sings to you of love, and then wails to you of disappointed love, till it fills you with a melancholy from which there is no escaping, from which you never wish to escape. It speaks to you as no other instrument ever speaks, and reveals to you with wonderful eloquence the sadness in which it delights. It produces a luxury of anguish, a fulness of the satisfaction of imaginary woe, a realization of the mysterious delights of romance, which no words can ever thoroughly supply. While the notes are living, while the music is still in the air, the ear comes to covet greedily every atom of tone which the instrument will produce, so that the slightest extraneous sound becomes an offence. The notes sink and sink so low and low, with their soft sad wail of delicious woe, that the listener dreads that something will be lost in the struggle of listening. There seems to come some lethargy on his sense of hearing, which he fears will shut out from his brain the last, lowest, sweetest strain, the very pearl of the music, for which he has been watching with all the intensity of prolonged desire. And then the zither is silent, and there remains a fond memory together with a deep regret.

Herr Crippel seated himself on his stool and looked once or twice round about

upon the room almost with dismay. Then he struck his zither, uncertainly, weakly, and commenced the prelude of his piece. But Lotta thought that she had never heard so sweet a sound. When he paused after a few strokes there was a sound of applause in the room,—of applause intended to encourage by commemorating past triumphs. The musician looked again away from his music to his audience, and his eyes caught the eyes of the girl he loved; and his gaze fell also upon the face of the handsome, well-dressed, young Adonis who was by her side. He, Herr Crippel the musician, could never make himself look like that; he could make no slightest approach to that outward triumph. But then, he could play the zither, and Fritz Planken could only play with his cane! He would do what he could! He would play his best! He had once almost resolved to get up and declare that he was too tired that evening to do justice to his instrument. But there was an insolence of success about his rival's hat and trousers which spirited him on to the fight. He struck his zither again, and they who understood him and his zither knew that he was in earnest.

The old men who had listened to him for the last twenty years declared that he had never played as he played on that night. At first he was somewhat bolder, somewhat louder than was his wont; as though he were resolved to go out of his accustomed track; but, after a while, he gave that up; that was simply the effect of nervousness, and was continued only while the timidity remained present with him. But he soon forgot everything but his zither and his desire to do it justice. The attention of all present soon became so close that you might have heard a pin fall. Even Fritz sat perfectly still, with his mouth open, and forgot to play with his cane. Lotta's eyes were quickly full of tears, and before long they were rolling down her cheeks. Herr Crippel, though he did not know that he looked at her, was aware that it was so. Then came upon them all there an ecstasy of delicious sadness. As I have said above, every ear was struggling that no softest sound might escape unheard. And then at last the zither was silent, and no one could have marked the moment when it had ceased to sing.

For a few moments there was perfect silence in the room, and the musician still kept his seat with his face turned upon his instrument. He knew well that he had succeeded, that his triumph had been complete, and every moment that the applause was suspended was an added jewel to his crown. But it soon came, the loud shouts of praise, the ringing bravos, the striking of glasses, his own name repeated from all parts of the hall, the clapping of hands, the sweet sound of women's voices, and the waving of white handkerchiefs. Herr Crippel stood up, bowed thrice, wiped his face with a handkerchief, and then sat down on a stool in the corner of the orchestra.

"I don't know much about his being too old," said Carl Stobel.

"Nor I either," said Lotta.

"That is what I call music," said Marie Weber.

"He can play the zither, certainly," said Fritz; "but as to the violin, it is more doubtful."

"He is excellent with both,—with both," said Lotta, angrily.

Soon after that the party got up to leave the hall, and as they went out they encountered Herr Crippel.

"You have gone beyond yourself to-night," said Marie, "and we wish you joy."

"Oh no. It was pretty good, was it? With the zither it depends mostly on the atmosphere; whether it is hot, or cold, or wet, or dry, or on I know not what. It is an accident if one plays well. Good-night to you. Good-night, Lotta. Good-night, sir." And he took off his hat, and bowed,—bowed, as it were, expressly to Fritz Planken.

"Herr Crippel," said Lotta, "one word with you." And she dropped behind from Fritz, and returned to the musician. "Herr Crippel, will you meet me at Sperl's to-morrow night?"

"At Sperl's? No. I do not go to Sperl's any longer, Lotta. You told me that Marie's friend was coming to-night; but you did not tell me of your own."

"Never mind what I told you, or did not tell you. Herr Crippel, will you come to Sperl's to-morrow?"

"No; you would not dance with me, and I should not care to see you dance with any one else."

"But I will dance with you."

"And Planken will be there?"

"Yes; Fritz will be there. He is always there. I cannot help that."

"No, Lotta; I will not go to Sperl's. I will tell you a little secret. At forty-five one is too old for Sperl's."

"There are men there every Sunday over fifty,—over sixty, I am sure."

"They are men different in their ways of life from me, my dear. No, I will not go to Sperl's. When will you come and see my mother?"

Lotta promised that she would go and see the Frau Crippel before long, and then tripped off and joined her party.

Stobel and Marie had walked on, while Fritz remained a little behind for Lotta.

"Did you ask him to come to Sperl's to-morrow?" he said.

"To be sure I did."

"Was that nice of you, Lotta?"

"Why not nice? Nice or not, I did it. Why should not I ask him, if I please?"

"Because I thought I was to have the pleasure of entertaining you;—that it was a little party of my own."

"Very well, Herr Planken," said Lotta, drawing herself a little away from him; "if a friend of mine is not welcome at your little party, I certainly shall not join it myself."

"But, Lotta, does not every one know what it is that Crippel wishes of you?"

"There is no harm in his wishing. My friends tell me that I am very foolish not to give him what he wishes. But I still have the chance."

"O yes; no doubt you still have the chance."

"Herr Crippel is a very good man. He is the best son in the world, and he makes two hundred florins a month."

"O, if that is to count!"

"Of course it is to count. Why should it not count? Would the Princess Theresa have married the other day if the young Prince had had no income to support her?"

"You can do as you please, Lotta."

"Yes, I can do as I please, certainly. I suppose Adela Bruhl will be at Sperl's to-morrow?"

"I should say so, certainly. I hardly ever knew her to miss her Sunday evening."

"Nor I. I, too, am fond of dancing,—very. I delight in dancing. But I am not a slave to Sperl's, and then I do not care to dance with every one."

"Adela Bruhl dances very well," said Fritz.

"That is as one may think. She ought to; for she begins at ten, and goes on till two, always. If there is no one nice for dancing she puts up with some one that is not nice. But all that is nothing to me."

"Nothing, I should say, Lotta."

"Nothing in the world. But this is something; last Sunday you danced three times with Adela."

"Did I? I did not count."

"I counted. It is my business to watch those things, if you are to be ever anything to me, Fritz. I will not pretend that I am indifferent. I am not indifferent. I care very much about it. Fritz, if you dance to-morrow with Adela you will not dance with me again,—either then or ever." And having uttered this threat she ran on and found Marie, who had just reached the door of the house in which they both lived.

Fritz, as he walked home by himself, was in doubt as to the course which it would be his duty as a man to pursue in reference to the lady whom he loved. He had distinctly heard that lady ask an old admirer of hers to go to Sperl's and dance with her; and yet, within ten minutes afterwards, she had peremptorily commanded him not to dance with another girl! Now, Fritz Planken had a very good opinion of himself, as he was well entitled to have, and was quite aware that other pretty girls besides Lotta Schmidt were within his reach. He did not receive two hundred florins a month, as did Herr Crippel, but then he was five-and-twenty instead of five-and-forty; and, in the matter of money, too, he was doing pretty well. He did love Lotta Schmidt. It would not be easy for him to part with her. But she, too, loved him,—as he told himself, and she would hardly push matters to extremities. At any rate, he would not submit to a threat. He would dance with Adela Bruhl, at Sperl's. He thought, at least, that when the time should come, he would find it well to dance with her.

Sperl's dancing saloon, in the Tabor Strasse, is a great institution at Vienna. It is open always of a Sunday evening, and dancing then commences at ten, and is continued till two or three o'clock in the morning. There are two large rooms, in one of which the dancers dance, and in the other the dancers and visitors, who do not dance, eat, and drink, and smoke continually. But the most wonderful part of Sperl's establishment is this, that there is nothing there to offend any one. Girls dance and men smoke, and there is eating and

drinking, and everybody is as well behaved as though there was a protecting phalanx of dowagers sitting round the wall of the saloon. There are no dowagers, though there may probably be a policeman somewhere about the place. To a stranger it is very remarkable that there is so little of what we call flirting;—almost none of it. It would seem that to the girls dancing is so much a matter of business, that here at Sperl's they can think of nothing else. To mind their steps,—and at the same time their dresses, lest they should be trod upon,—to keep full pace with the music, to make all the proper turns at every proper time, and to have the foot fall on the floor at the exact instant; all this is enough, without further excitement. You will see a girl dancing with a man as though the man were a chair, or a stick, or some necessary piece of furniture. She condescends to use his services, but as soon as the dance is over she sends him away. She hardly speaks a word to him, if a word! She has come there to dance, and not to talk; unless, indeed, like Marie Weber and Lotta Schmidt, she has a recognized lover there of her very own.

At about half-past ten Marie and Lotta entered the saloon, and paid their kreutzers, and sat themselves down on seats in the further saloon, from which, through open archways, they could see the dancers. Neither Carl nor Fritz had come as yet, and the girls were quite content to wait. It was to be presumed that they would be there before the men, and they both understood that the real dancing was not commenced early in the evening. It might be all very well for such as Adela Bruhl to dance with any one who came at ten o'clock, but Lotta Schmidt would not care to amuse herself after that fashion. As to Marie, she was to be married after another week, and of course she would dance with no one but Carl Stobel.

"Look at her," said Lotta, pointing with her foot to a fair girl, very pretty, but with hair somewhat untidy, who at this moment was waltzing in the other room. "That lad is a waiter from the Minden hotel. I know him. She would dance with any one."

"I suppose she likes dancing, and there is no harm in the boy," said Marie,

"No, there is no harm, and if she likes it I do not begrudge it her. See what red hands she has."

"She is of that complexion," said Marie.

"Yes, she is of that complexion all over; look at her face. At any rate she might have better shoes on. Did you ever see anybody so untidy?"

"She is very pretty," said Marie.

"Yes, she is pretty. There is no doubt she is pretty. She is not a native here. Her people are from Munich. Do you know, Marie, I think girls are always thought more of in other countries than in their own."

Soon after this Carl and Fritz came together, and Fritz, as he passed across the end of the first saloon, spoke a word or two to Adela. Lotta saw this, but determined that she would take no offence at so small a matter. Fritz need not have stopped to speak, but his doing so might be all very well. At any rate, if she did quarrel with him she would quarrel on a plain intelligible ground. Within two minutes Carl and Marie were dancing, and Fritz had asked Lotta to stand up.

"I will wait a little," said she, "I never like to begin much before eleven."

"As you please," said Fritz; and he sat down in the chair which Marie had occupied. Then he played with his cane, and as he did so his eyes followed the steps of Adela Bruhl.

"She dances very well," said Lotta.

"H—m—m, yes." Fritz did not choose to bestow any strong praise on Adela's dancing.

"Yes, Fritz, she does dance well,—very well indeed. And she is never tired. If you ask me whether I like her style, I cannot quite say that I do. It is not what we do here,—not exactly."

"She has lived in Vienna since she was a child."

"It is in the blood then, I suppose. Look at her fair hair, all blowing about. She is not like one of us."

"Oh no, she is not."

"That she is very pretty, I quite admit," said Lotta. "Those soft grey eyes are delicious. Is it not a pity she has no eyebrows?"

"But she has eyebrows."

"Ah; you have been closer than I, and you have seen them. I have never danced with her, and I cannot see them. Of course they are there,—more or less."

After a while the dancing ceased, and Adela Bruhl came up into the supper-room, passing the seats on which Fritz and Lotta were sitting.

"Are you not going to dance, Fritz," she said, with a smile, as she passed them.

"Go, go," said Lotta; "why do you not go? She has invited you."

"No; she has not invited me. She spoke to us both."

"She did not speak to me, for my name is not Fritz. I do not see how you can help going, when she asked you so prettily."

"I shall be in plenty of time presently. Will you dance now, Lotta? They are going to begin a waltz, and we will have a quadrille afterwards."

"No, Herr Planken, I will not dance just now."

"Herr Planken is it? You want to quarrel with me then, Lotta."

"I do not want to be one of two. I will not be one of two. Adela Bruhl is very pretty, and I advise you to go to her. I was told only yesterday her father can give her fifteen hundred florins of fortune! For me,—I have no father."

"But you may have a husband to-morrow."

"Yes, that is true, and a good one. Oh, such a good one!"

"What do you mean by that?"

"You go and dance with Adela Bruhl, and you shall see what I mean."

Fritz had some idea in his own mind, more or less clearly developed, that his fate, as regarded Lotta Schmidt, now lay in his own hands. He undoubtedly desired to have Lotta for his own. He would have married her there and then,—at that moment had it been possible. He had quite made up his mind that he preferred her much to Adela Bruhl, though Adela Bruhl had fifteen hundred florins. But he did not like to endure tyranny, even from Lotta, and he did not know how to escape the tyranny otherwise than

by dancing with Adela. He paused a moment, swinging his cane, endeavouring to think how he might best assert his manhood and yet not offend the girl he loved. But he found that to assert his manhood was now his first duty.

"Well, Lotta," he said, "since you are so cross with me, I will ask Adela to dance." And in two minutes he was spinning round the room with Adela Bruhl in his arms.

"Certainly she dances very well," said Lotta, smiling, to Marie, who had now come back to her seat.

"Very well," said Marie, who was out of breath.

"And so does he."

"Beautifully," said Marie.

"Is it not a pity that I should have lost such a partner for ever?"

"Lotta!"

"It is true. Look here, Marie, there is my hand upon it. I will never dance with him again,—never,—never,—never. Why was he so hard upon Herr Crippel last night?"

"Was he hard upon Herr Crippel?"

"He said that Herr Crippel was too old to play the zither; too old! Some people are too young to understand. I shall go home, I shall not stay to sup with you to-night."

"Lotta, you must stay for supper."

"I will not sup at his table. I have quarrelled with him. It is all over. Fritz Planken is as free as the air for me."

"Lotta, do not say anything in a hurry. At any rate do not do anything in a hurry."

"I do not mean to do anything at all. It is simply this,—I do not care very much for Fritz after all. I don't think I ever did. It is all very well to wear your clothes nicely, but if that is all, what does it come to? If he could play the zither, now!"

"There are other things except playing the zither. They say he is a good book-keeper."

"I don't like book-keeping. He has to be at his hotel from eight in the morning till eleven at night."

"You know best."

"I am not so sure of that. I wish I did know best. But I never saw such a girl as you are. How you change! It was only yesterday you scolded me because I did not wish to be the wife of your dear friend Crippel."

"Herr Crippel is a very good man."

"You go away with your good man! you have got a good man of your own. He is standing there waiting for you, like a gander on one leg. He wants you to dance; go away." Then Marie did go away, and Lotta was left alone by herself. She certainly had behaved badly to Fritz, and she was aware of it. She excused herself to herself by remembering that she had never yet given Fritz a promise. She was her own mistress, and had, as yet, a right to do what she pleased with herself. He had asked her for her love, and she had not told him that he should not have it. That was all. Herr

Crippel had asked her a dozen times, and she had at last told him definitely, positively, that there was no hope for him. Herr Crippel, of course, would not ask her again;—so she told herself. But if there was no such person as Herr Crippel in all the world, she would have nothing more to do with Fritz Planken,—nothing more to do with him as a lover. He had given her fair ground for a quarrel, and she would take advantage of it. Then as she sat still while they were dancing, she closed her eyes and thought of the zither and of the zitherist. She remained alone for a long time. The musicians in Vienna will play a waltz for twenty minutes, and the same dancers will continue to dance almost without a pause; and then, almost immediately afterwards, there was a quadrille. Fritz, who was resolved to put down tyranny, stood up with Adela for the quadrille also. "I am so glad," said Lotta to herself. "I will wait till this is over, and then I will say good-night to Marie, and will go home." Three or four men had asked her to dance, but she had refused. She would not dance to-night at all. She was inclined, she thought, to be a little serious, and would go home. At last Fritz returned to her, and bade her come to supper. He was resolved to see how far his mode of casting off tyranny might be successful, so he approached her with a smile, and offered to take her to his table as though nothing had happened.

"My friend," she said, "your table is laid for four, and the places will all be filled."

"The table is laid for five," said Fritz.

"It is one too many. I shall sup with my friend, Herr Crippel."

"Herr Crippel is not here."

"Is he not? Ah me! then I shall be alone, and I must go to bed supperless. Thank you, no, Herr Planken."

"And what will Marie say?"

"I hope she will enjoy the nice dainties you will give her. Marie is all right. Marie's fortune is made. Woe is me! my fortune is to seek. There is one thing certain, it is not to be found here in this room."

Then Fritz turned on his heel and went away; and as he went Lotta saw the figure of a man, as he made his way slowly and hesitatingly into the saloon from the outer passage. He was dressed in a close frock coat, and had on a hat of which she knew the shape as well as she did the make of her own gloves. "If he has not come after all!" she said to herself. Then she turned herself a little round, and drew her chair somewhat into an archway, so that Herr Crippel should not see her readily.

The other four had settled themselves at their table, Marie having said a word of reproach to Lotta as she passed. Now, on a sudden, she got up from her seat and crossed to her friend.

"Herr Crippel is here," she said.

"Of course he is here," said Lotta.

"But you did not expect him?"

"Ask Fritz if I did not say I would sup with Herr Crippel. You ask him. But I shall not all the same. Do not say a word. I shall steal away when nobody is looking."

The musician came wandering up the room, and had looked into every

corner before he had even found the supper-table at which the four were sitting. And then he did not see Lotta. He took off his hat as he addressed Marie, and asked some question as to the absent one.

"She is waiting for you somewhere, Herr Crippel," said Fritz, as he filled Adela's glass with wine.

"For me?" said Herr Crippel, as he looked round. "No, she does not expect me." And in the meantime Lotta had left her seat, and was hurrying away to the door.

"There! there!" said Marie; "you will be too late if you do not run." Then Herr Crippel did run, and caught Lotta as she was taking her hat from the old woman who had the girls' hats and shawls in charge near the door.

"What, Herr Crippel, you at Sperl's? When you told me expressly, in so many words, that you would not come! That is not behaving well to me, certainly."

"What, my coming? Is that behaving bad?"

"No; but why did you say you would not come when I asked you? You have come to meet some one. Who is it?"

"You, Lotta; you."

"And yet you refused me when I asked you! Well, and now you are here, what are you going to do? You will not dance."

"I will dance with you, if you will put up with me."

"No, I will not dance. I am too old. I have given it up. I shall come to Sperl's no more after this. Dancing is a folly."

"Lotta, you are laughing at me now."

"Very well; if you like, you may have it so." By this time he had brought her back into the room, and was walking up and down the length of the saloon with her. "But it is no use our walking about here," she said. "I was just going home, and now, if you please, I will go."

"Not yet, Lotta."

"Yes; now, if you please."

"But why are you not supping with them?"

"Because it did not suit me. You see there are four. Five is a foolish number for a supper party."

"Will you sup with me, Lotta?" She did not answer him at once.

"Lotta," he said, "if you sup with me now you must sup with me always. How shall it be?"

"Always? no. I am very hungry now, but I do not want supper always. I cannot sup with you always, Herr Crippel."

"But you will to-night?"

"Yes, to-night."

"Then it shall be always." And the musician marched up to a table, and threw his hat down, and ordered such a supper that Lotta Schmidt was frightened. And when presently Carl Stobel and Marie Weber came up to their table,—for Fritz Planken did not come near them again that evening,—Herr Crippel bowed courteously to the diamond-cutter, and asked him when he was to be married.

"Marie says it shall be next Sunday," said Carl.

"And I will be married the Sunday afterwards," said Herr Crippel. "Yes; and there is my wife." And he pointed across the table with both his hands to Lotta Schmidt.

"Herr Crippel, how can you say that?" said Lotta.

"Is it not true, my dear?"

"In fourteen days! no, certainly not. It is out of the question." But nevertheless what Herr Crippel said came true, and on the next Sunday but one he took Lotta Schmidt home to his house as his wife.

"It was all because of the zither," Lotta said to her old mother-in-law. "If he had not played the zither that night I should not have been here now."

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.



THE MINISTER-PAINTER.

IN glancing backward over the last century and a half of Scottish history, it will be noticed that distinguished men have come in clusters, and that the intellectual products of these are visible in well-defined belts or zones. Nature there, as elsewhere, built capacious brains, and when her hand was in, it was her habit to build more than one, and so, the clever Scotchmen of a generation have a family resemblance, and the works produced by them have a family resemblance also. Hume, Robertson, and Adam Smith came together, and through these we have the philosophic and historical belt. Scott and Galt created the imaginative belt; Jeffrey, Wilson, and Lockhart the critical belt. In any enumeration of eminent Scotchmen the name of Burns cannot be omitted, but then Burns has no place in any such loose generalizations. In his greatness he is the loneliest of all the northern geniuses. He had, strictly speaking, no predecessor, he had no companion, he has had no successor. Critics have delighted to point out that the *Farmer's Ingle* of Fergusson was the prototype of the *Cottar's Saturday Night*; but the truth is that Fergusson had no more share in the most exquisite of homely idylls than the leaves of the mulberry-tree on which the silkworm feeds has a share in the silk which is produced. Putting Burns aside, as in some sense a special phenomenon who must be considered by himself if considered at all, the three broadly-marked belts or zones of Scottish mental activity are indicated by the *Essays, Moral and Philosophical*, and the *Wealth of Nations*; the novels of Scott and Galt; and the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*. So much one can see looking back on the past; but it would be extremely difficult to say what, since the establishment of the famous *Review*, and the still more famous *Magazine*, is the salient outstanding feature of Scottish intellectual life. And the difficulty lies in this, that, ecclesiastical matters apart, there has during the last twenty or twenty-five years been hardly any distinctive Scottish life at all. "Stands Scotland where it did?" asks Macduff; and the answer to-day is, "No. If you seek Scotland you must go to London for her." The old frontier line

has been effaced by the railway and the post-office. The Tweed no longer divides peoples with different interests. Scotland and England have melted into each other and become Britain, just as red and blue melt into each other and become purple; and in the general intellectual activity of the empire it would be as difficult to separate that contributed by north and south as to separate the waters of the Forth and the Humber in the German Ocean, or the taxes gathered on either side of the Tweed in the imperial exchequer. John Bull and Patrick serve in the ranks of the Black Watch and the Greys, and Sandy is a sentry at the Horse Guards. An English professor is the most distinguished disciple of the Scottish Sir William Hamilton; and the representative of a metropolitan constituency—a Scot at least by extraction—is the intellectual descendant of the English Bentham. It is from this interconnection of the two peoples, that for the last quarter of a century there has been so little *distinctive* Scottish intellectual life. Scotland has overflowed its boundaries, and it has no longer a separate existence in thought or geography. It is not, however, to be supposed that although working under different conditions there is any diminution in the northern vigour. The Scot thinks as shrewdly and acts as prudently in Cheapside as at Aberdeen or at John o' Groat's; and when great things have to be done—when, for instance, a treaty has to be negotiated with China, when a revolted India has to be subdued, when a *Life of Frederick* has to be written—the doers of those feats of diplomacy, arms, and letters, are not unfrequently found wearing Scottish names. But the difficulty of pointing out any broad, salient, outstanding feature in Scottish intellectual life does not altogether arise from the cessation of that life in the sense it has been explained, but in some degree from the fact that since the establishment of *Blackwood's Magazine* Scottish intellect and fancy have more and more sought a new manifestation and direction. For long Scotland was the best educated and least æsthetic nation in Europe. Beauty and ornament had never been the denizens of the Scottish house or the Scottish street, and at the Reformation they were sternly thrust forth and forbidden to enter the ecclesiastical edifice. In Scotland Beauty was churchless; and on Sundays had to abide with the daisy in the field, the cloud-shadow on the hill-side, and to consort with the Poet, who was a commoner of nature like herself, and labouring under the same social ban. Not the least religious nation in the world, the Scotch were content to worship in barn-like buildings, with windows hard in outline and innocent of colour as those of factories; and Music, suspected of Popish parentage, and of haunting the playhouse and the opera, was turned away from the church door, and had to go romp in the fields with Beauty and the Poet. Untouched by the softening influences of art, the Scottish nation was devout, deep-hearted, humorous, sincere; but it was harsh in manner, deficient in graciousness and suavity. The visitor on coming to Scottish towns was struck by the lack of politeness on the part of the inhabitants. He saw them, unyielding as tides, jostle each other on the pavement. If he asked to be directed to a particular street he not unfrequently received a churlish response. He noted that in these towns statues and public monuments were rare, that they were disregarded and

often ill kept; and if a travelled man he drew disadvantageous comparisons between the Scottish towns and the French or Italian ones. This hardness and lack of graciousness, this lack of art and of regard for art, was attributable to a considerable extent to the national poverty and the national faith. There is no social civilizer like art, but art does not grow in poor countries any more than grapes in poor soils. You may keep a poet on seventy pounds a year, and get a good deal out of him, just as our fathers for something like that sum got a tremendous deal out of Burns, but you cannot so cheaply maintain painters and sculptors. If you will adorn your apartments with their works they can at least claim upholsterers' wages. And putting inspiration out of the question altogether, pigments and marble are much more expensive than pens and ink, and the backs of old letters, or excise schedules on a push. On Calvinism you can breed first-rate men, but not so easily first-rate artists. Art delights in minster and cathedral, in painted window and fuming incense, in gorgeous vestments and the voices of singing-men and singing-women, and finds but little sustenance in barn-like churches, discordant psalmody, hard rigid pews, and intrepid, closely-knit, logical discourses. Scotland was a well-educated country, as countries went, but it wanted artistic susceptibility; and it was only when it became comparatively rich, and when its social atmosphere became a little more genial, that art began to develop itself in any general or unmistakable manner. The picture and the statue came with wealth into the private apartment; the ornate church, the famous man in bronze or marble, came with wealth into the street; and the public eye becoming accustomed to these things, gradually learned to enjoy them. The establishment of the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine* was the last distinct phase of Scottish—that is, of Scottish as distinct from British—intellectual life; and at that time Scottish art was in its vigorous youth and quite abreast of Scottish literature. Scotchmen, save in isolated instances, and generally out of their own country, have done nothing very remarkable in literature since; but at home there has grown up a school of art, distinct, vigorous, individual, which has spread far and wide, and which has more than one representative amongst the Forty of the Royal Academy. The pen was long the favourite weapon of the clever Scot, but since John Wilson's time the cleverest men in Scotland have wielded the brush rather than the pen.

The school of Scottish art had at first, as was natural, a good deal in common with the more favourite form of Scottish literature—of poetry more especially. When the northern muse was not piercingly lyrical—tingling to the very marrow in song and ballad—it was for the main part garrulous and manners-painting. Rustic life, its humours, its fun, its jealousies, its petty passions, its coarsenesses even—when these were reflected in some incident like a marriage, a festival, a fair, or a wapinschaw—has always had special attraction for the Scottish muse. This vein of manners-painting is visible from *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, up through the *Gentle Shepherd* of Ramsay, the *Leith Races* of Fergusson, the *Jolly Beggars*, and *Hallowe'en* of Burns, to the *Anster Fair* of Tennant; and in the same way, and to be explained by the same reasons, the Scottish school of painting abounds in admirable representations of rustic life: witness the best pictures of David Allan, the "Penny

Wedding," and a dozen others of Sir David Wilkie, the "Curlers" of Mr. Harvey, and the works of many others less distinguished. The Scottish painters have in an indirect, yet most sufficient manner, illustrated the Scottish poets. In this special department Scottish art will take rank with Dutch—with the advantage that it has more *esprit* and less of mere vulgar swilling and boorishness. In the domain of highest art—just as there is no northern Spenser or Milton—it is behind England, and has perhaps no proper representative, if we except the late Mr. David Scott and the present Mr. J. Noel Paton. In portraiture and landscape the Scottish school excels. In the department of portraiture the Scotch are distinguished by a solidity of basis and treatment, and a direct going at essentials to the neglect of subsidiaries. Any one looking at the men Sir Henry Raeburn, Sir John Watson Gordon, and Mr. Macnee have painted, will see that in the delineation of characteristic heads and faces, of men who are individual and not copies, the national shrewdness, humour, biographical talent and insight, have in the most mysterious way become mixed with the colours. I say the *men* these artists have painted, for somehow they have not succeeded so well with women. If the Scotch style has a fault it is that of robustness, of solid force and character—elements which are much more masculine than feminine. Given a granite-faced provost of Peterhead, wrinkled all over with shrewd, pawky, tell-tale lines, and there are half a dozen Scotchmen who will paint him so to the life that the spectator will know what kind of a voice he has, whether he has been married twice, and what he usually takes for breakfast. Given an elegant lady, and perhaps Sir Francis Grant is the only Scotchman who can paint her in her self-possession and easy security—high bred to the finger tips, and perfectly *comme il faut* in the matter of gloves. Sir Henry Raeburn struck the key-note of Scottish portrait painting, and it is vibrating still. In Scottish landscape again—which partake of similar characteristics—the key-note was struck by the Rev. Mr. Thomson of Duddingstone, and his influence is observable not only in Mr. Macculloch's "cold and splendour of the hills," in the Wordsworthian repose of Mr. Harvey's pastoral hill-sides, but in Mr. Peter Graham's "Mountain River in Flood," amongst the landscapes of the Royal Academy of this year the observed of all observers.

Mr. Thomson, while he lived, was the most distinguished landscape painter of the Scottish school, and he was unique in this, that he was clergyman as well as painter; that it was his work to study the page of nature and the page of revelation. It would be interesting to know, if it were at all now possible, how he conducted this double life—if the artistic and clerical elements played into each other, enriching and assisting—the one bringing reverence and sanctity into his studio, the other bringing pictures into his sermons. When discoursing on the Dead Sea, did he behold in imagination the red hills of Moab looming low on the horizon? If prelecting on the passage, and in the course of his ministrations it is certain that he would prelect—*And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw THE PLACE*

AFAR OFF—one would like to know what mental image he formed of the yet untempled Moriah; was it a Syrian mount or the double-peaked Benledi—the Hill of God of his own country—with the Scottish morning spread above it? One would like to know, if one could, whether Thomson brought the landscape painter with him into the pulpit. Of his quality as a preacher no information can be obtained. The people who bought his pictures did not care for his sermons; the people who listened to his sermons did not care for his pictures. His parishioners regarded his landscape painting as they regarded his violin playing—a pretty amusement enough, but one not in the least befitting the dignity of his cloth. Thomson was no doubt an excellent preacher, after a quiet, elegant, unenthusiastic, charitable fashion. He was in every way an accomplished man. He had a competent knowledge of literature, and when working on his landscapes was in the habit of reciting from the classical and English poets, passages that bore on the scene he was depicting; he was an exquisite musician; he was well read in the natural sciences, and contributed several papers on those subjects to the *Edinburgh Review*. We know how he painted, we can guess how he preached; but the fact that he was both preacher and painter takes him out of the category of ordinary men. A solitary, sad-eyed, mediæval monk, illuminating missals in a cloistered silence, broken only by the tinkling of refectory or prayer bells, is familiar enough to the imagination; but a modern Presbyterian clergyman, painting pictures on week days and preaching sermons on Sundays; writing papers on optics to the *Edinburgh Review* and drawing tears in the evening in his drawing-room by his violin performances; throwing down his brushes of a forenoon, placing against the wall a picture of the Bass with a thunder-cloud blackening over it; going out to see an ailing parishioner, and noting on his way how a sunbeam made gleam the ivies on Craigmillar which a shower had just wet, and returning to receive to dinner Sir Walter Scott fresh from the *Bride of Lammermoor*, and Sir David Wilkie fresh from Spain and the study of Vélasquez—this complex activity, this variety of duty, this fulness of noble life, is something not very frequently met with.

Young Thomson was born at Dailly, in Ayrshire, of which parish his father was minister in the latter half of the last century, and there, amid the beautiful scenery surrounding him, he nourished his taste for landscape. His father destined him for the sacred profession; and at a very early age, in accordance with a Scottish fashion not yet in abeyance, he was sent to the University of Edinburgh to attend literary and philosophical classes preparatory to entering on the study of divinity. At the lodgings of his elder brother, who had come to Edinburgh some years before, and who in after life became distinguished as a feudal lawyer and an antiquarian, the enthusiastic young man made the acquaintance of Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey, and others. He stuck to his work during the winter sessions, but in his summer vacations at home he devoted himself to painting and violin playing, to the no small consternation of his father, who could not help marvelling at the strange bird growing up in the quiet, orderly, clerical nest. All this while, whatever might have been his progress, he had no teacher but nature, and it was only during the last year of his theological curriculum that he had the advantage of lessons from

Alexander Naismith, and that only for the period of one month. At the age of twenty-one he was licensed; and on the death of his father, in the first year of the century, he succeeded to the Dailly manse and the Dailly pulpit. A year after he married; and in a house rapidly filling with babies he composed his sermons, painted his pictures, and played on his violin. In 1805 he was translated to the parish of Duddingstone, near Edinburgh—a place perhaps the best suited for him in Scotland—where he could walk out into the fields at eventide, like Isaac; where he could watch the purple thunder-gloom gathering on the distant hills, like Claude.

In May, passing along the Queen's Drive in a south-easterly direction—sheep and lambs bleating above, the starling glistening as it sweeps past through the sunshine—you see Duddingstone Loch beneath you, with its stunted and pollard willows, whitey-green in the wind, its banks and promontories of rushes, its dozen swans reduced to the size of water lilies, its cloud-shadows crossed by the trail of low-flying teal. Proceeding some twenty yards or so you come in sight of the little village itself, and note its grey, low-roofed Norman-like church, its scattered houses, the garden slopes behind, and the interstices between filled with plum and apple blossom; its yellow-faced inn in which tradition mumbles Prince Charles slept the night before the battle of Prestonpans, or else the night after; and the swiftly-greening woods beyond, stretching towards Portobello and the sea. As you look down upon it from the drive 'tis a mere toy-village, breathing soft smoke pillars, breathing fruit-tree fragrance. The quietest place in the whole world you would say; not a creature to be seen in the little bit of a street visible; silent as Pompeii itself; motion only on the lake, when the coot shoots across its surface, or when a swan, thrusting its long neck under water, tilts itself upward in its preposterous fashion. And this little clachan of twenty or thirty houses is walled, too, like a Babylon or Nineveh; not one on which six chariots could race abreast—a wall strictly proportioned to modest pretensions. Descending on Duddingstone you find it retired, low-lying, sunshiny, umbrageous; a place in which in summer you may expect plenty of dust in the narrow streets, plenty of drowsy bees around the double-flowered white and purple stocks in the gardens, plenty of flies buzzing in the sunny parlour windows. You see the old low-roofed Norman-looking church—several centuries old some portions of it, antiquaries say—with its pointed windows and flagged roofs; the churchyard heaped and mounded with generations on generations of village dead; the rusty "joughs"—an iron collar in which malefactors did penance of old—hanging on the churchyard wall near the gate of entrance, with its "louping-on-stane," well worn by the hobnails of dead farmers. Near the church is the Manse in which the minister-painter lived, looking out with all its windows on the lake; on ivied Craigmillar in which Queen Mary dwelt; on the low hills of Braid, over which Marmion rode, on which Fitz Eustace

Raised his bridle hand,
And threw a demivolt in air;

and sight of the old Edinburgh of the Jameses, smoke-swathed; and beyond, on the lovely undulating line of the Pentlands, stained, as in these bright spring

days, with the white uprolling vapour of the heather-burnings. Duddingstone is the prettiest place in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh in summer—and it is, if possible, still more worth seeing about Christmas. Then the swans are of course gone; the chestnuts have lost their broad drooping fans, and have donned their strange snow draperies; from out the frosty blue white Arthur's Seat looks down on the little village. At that season Edinburgh flocks Duddingstone-wards. Pedestrians and carriages stand along the margin of the loch; carriages and pedestrians move slowly along the Queen's Drive above. The lake itself is crowded as Vanity Fair; skaters shoot hither and thither; while in a carefully preserved circle, members of the Edinburgh Skating Club go through the most graceful evolutions, and intertwist with each other in the prettiest loops and chains. At a little distance the curlers are busy, their faces red with exercise, their eyes bright with excitement, the on-lookers stamping their chilled feet in the snow, and attempting to breathe a little warmth into their frost-bitten fingers. Everywhere, on great belts of slides, people are working their arms like awkward windmills. Here skims a skate-shod Diana—fleet huntress of men! yonder, in a sleigh driven by admirers, sits a lady enveloped in furs. Past your ear whizzes a shinty ball, and down upon you in hot pursuit thereof comes, with a noise like a troop of wild horses, a horde of young fellows, each armed with a cudgel, a long-haired Highlander leading the charge—as Murat was wont to do—several lengths in front. The Highlander is up with the ball, as he turns on it his foot slips, and in a moment the crowd are over him. There is a general *mêlée*, and then out of the crowd, and in an opposite direction, spins the ball, another fellow leading the pursuit now, the eager crowd streaming behind him like a comet's tail. So around Duddingstone the seasons come and go—so they came and went while Thomson lived there, umbrageousness of summer, pallor of winter; each differing from the other, yet each aiding the painter's education.

In the pretty Duddingstone Manse Thomson established himself, and there, for thirty-five years, his life flowed on peacefully, prosperously, honoured by high and low. As a clergyman, he was much esteemed by his parishioners, consisting mainly of well-to-do folks who lived in villas, and small market-gardeners who brought their produce into Edinburgh, and washerwomen who worked for the inhabitants of the city, washing the clothes in the loch, and bleaching and drying them on the slopes of Arthur's Seat, where they caught the scent of the broom. To the former class the minister commended himself by his accomplishments, his gentlemanly manners, and his distinction; to the latter by his liberality and kind-heartedness, and his frank ways going in and out amongst them. The price of many a landscape came to the poor people, when sickness or distress was prevalent, in the shape of bottles of wine or even of comforts more substantial. It was at Duddingstone that Thomson first devoted himself to landscape painting as a profession. Craigmillar was before his eyes every time he looked out of his window, and this subject he frequently painted—often with grand effect by moonlight. While at Dailly he distributed landscapes amongst his friends, at Duddingstone he accepted payment. The first picture was sold for fifteen guineas, and the artist, it is said, was so startled with the mighty sum, that it was only when Mr.

Williams, the delineator of Greek scenery, whom he had consulted on the subject, told him that the work was worth three times as much, that he could comfortably consign the coins to his breeches pockets. As his reputation rose the demand for his works increased, and in his heyday of health and artistic prosperity he was in the receipt of 1800*l.* per annum. Some idea of Thomson's industry may be gathered from the prices he received. For a picture thirty inches long and from twenty to twenty-five inches broad, he got twenty-five guineas; for one forty-eight or fifty inches by thirty-six, his price was fifty guineas. These were high prices for a Scottish artist at that date; and for the works executed for the Duke of Buccleuch—and which may be seen at Bowhill—he received still higher sums. His passion for his art grew with his years, and he searched the country for subjects for his easel with greater ardour than he searched the Scriptures for texts for his sermons. His pulpit at Duddingstone had to be filled of course, but then the capital was near and probationers plentiful. By the time the young artist left the Manse on Saturday afternoon, the probationer had arrived with a couple of sermons in his carpet-bag. In company with his friend Mr. Williams—Grecian Williams, he was called, familiarly and affectionately, from those pictures already alluded to on which his reputation mainly rests—he searched the country for ancient houses with trees around them, picturesque glens, castles beetling over the sea, and bare moors with a group of old Scotch firs, their bronze trunks and black-green crowns standing up in the fires of autumn sunset. The two friends sketched together and were each the other's critic. In these passionate sketching pilgrimages, extending over many years, Thomson visited the most picturesque districts of Scotland, and painted Dunstaffnage, Dunluce, Wolf's Crag, the Falls of Kilmorack, Glenfinlas, Lochs Awe and Etive; nay, he even penetrated as far as Skye and painted the magnificent peak of Ben Blaven, and the edges of Cuchullin holding dark communion with the cloud. Being a clergyman, Thomson, although urged upon to do so, would never become a member of any incorporated body of artists; but he always sent his pictures to the Exhibitions of the Royal Scottish Academy. From 1808 to 1840 he contributed to those exhibitions one hundred and nine works. He was also strangely disinclined to exhibit in London, and as a rule, Englishmen are not acquainted with his pictures. In the beginning of the year 1840 his health began to fail: although no improvement took place during summer, he still worked on at picture and sermon. Conscious that his end was nigh, on a lovely October afternoon he desired to be taken to a window, and propped up by pillows, that he might watch once more the setting sun. It was a last interview between the ancient friends; an eternal farewell-taking. The sun set ruddily. Thomson was dead next morning. He was twice married—happily both times—and his portrait, by his son-in-law, Mr Robert Scott Lauder, hangs in the Scottish National Gallery.

During Thomson's life Duddingstone Manse was not more remarkable for exquisite picture painting and violin playing than for the distinguished men occasionally gathered under its roof. When Thomson came up to Edinburgh as a student he made the acquaintance of Scott and Jeffrey, and during life that acquaintance remained unimpaired. Sir Thomas Dick

Lauder, and John Clerk (Lord Eldin), who with a Homeric conviviality, broad humorous speech, and eccentric manners, combined a love of art, and had made an admirable collection of paintings, drawings, prints, and etchings, were frequent visitors at the Manse. John Wilson, as great a landscape painter in words as Thomson in colours, occasionally dropped in on the minister to discuss the Greek and Latin poets with him, and to see what landscape was smiling or glooming on his canvas. I am indebted for the following note concerning the painter's artistic friends to Mr. W. B. Johnstone, Curator of the Scottish National Gallery, and himself an admirable artist, the extent of whose information on such matters is only equalled by his courtesy in imparting it:—

"I think Thomson preferred the company of artists to that of literary men or lawyers, and after painters he liked to have musicians about him. During his earlier career there were few artists of sufficient standing to be associated with him on equal terms. I can only call to remembrance Alexander Naismith, Raeburn, and H. W. Williams, who could be ranked *pari passu*. But when Thomson was at his best Naismith had become an old cynical man; and although it is said that Thomson had taken lessons from him, their styles were wide apart, and Thomson's was more generally admired. Raeburn, engrossed with the study of character and expression in the human face, looked on landscape as a mere accessory to art. He was intimate with Thomson, admired his genius and general accomplishments, respected his social position; but the congeniality of feeling between the men may be doubted from the following transaction. They agreed to exchange pictures; Raeburn was to paint Thomson's portrait, and in return Thomson was to paint a landscape. Thomson sat to Raeburn and the portrait was painted, and although Thomson repeatedly offered to fulfil his part of the agreement, Raeburn declined to give up the portrait, and accordingly it has never been out of the possession of Raeburn and his family. Grecian Williams was a man after Thomson's own heart. They were about the same age, they were ardent worshippers of nature, which they looked on exactly in the same preconceived idea or aspect, viz., the classic form; and no petty jealousy could have place between them, as the one worked in oils the other in water colours. Williams was possessed of some literary taste, was quiet and gentlemanly in his manners, and was, like Thomson, on terms of intimacy with most of the principal Edinburgh men. William Allan and Andrew Wilson were on friendly terms with the minister, and were with him occasionally at the Manse; but Thomson had now achieved a high position, and a number of clever young artists were springing up, and he took pleasure in having them rather than their elders around him. Of the young artists Robert Scott Lauder and William Simson were most frequently at the Manse. Lauder was there almost daily; his admiration of Thomson was unbounded. The rich tones of colour he generally attained in his own pictures much resembled those Thomson often successfully produced, and Thomson's liking for the young artist was confirmed when he afterwards became his son-in-law. Simson's style was not what Thomson aimed at, yet the feeling for nature and the admirable execution impressed Thomson most favourably, and many of the figures, vessels, etc.,

in Thomson's pictures are evidently the work of this artist's dexterous hand. Thomas Duncan was an occasional visitor. Thomson marked him as a rising man, and Duncan had a high respect for the talent of *Duddy*, as he styled the minister (who was rather slovenly in his dress, the front of his waistcoat being generally besmeared with snuff), but their aims in art were widely apart; Duncan could never get up, or cared to evince the same admiration for a landscape as for a figure picture. Thomson showed a great liking for Horatio Macculloch, and when he came up from Glasgow or Hamilton, where he then resided, to the opening of the annual exhibition at Edinburgh, he had him always to dine at the Manse. Many other young artists, Sir Francis Grant, the President of the Royal Academy, then commencing his career, E. T. Crawford, Robert Gibb, and others, were kindly noticed by Thomson and asked to his house. He kept almost an open house, and when distinguished artists came from London, Wilkie or Turner for instance, his young friends were always invited to dine at the Manse, in order that they might meet and be introduced to the brilliant strangers."

All this shows a kindly, composed, generous disposition, far above professional vanity and rivalry, which is pleasant to contemplate. Turner was frequently at the Manse, and we all know the story how when the minister took the *brusque* painter into his studio and showed him his works, he called out, "You beat me in frames, Thomson!" On another occasion, at Duddingstone, when Francis Grant and Mr. Horsman, M.P., were present, Grant, who then resided in Regent's Park, near the Zoological Gardens, asked the great painter to dine with him. "I'll be very glad," cried Turner, jocosely; "I often come to see the wild beasts feed."

Thomson, during his lifetime, was the greatest Scottish landscape painter, and even yet he is one of the greatest which the northern school has produced. His style was based on classic models, he was a devout student of Claude and the Poussins, but this study of the old masters of landscape was supplemented by a constant reference to nature. He worked constantly in the open air, and face to face with his subject. While a young man, and living in his father's manse at Dailly, he would frequently go out at two o'clock on a summer morning, and walk several miles to watch the effect of the early sunbeams penetrating the tree branches, retiring step by step to note the changes of the light. Many of the old fastnesses on the Scottish coast he sketched on the spot. Although defective in drawing, he was fond of colour, and by repainting on his pictures succeeded in producing a surface which increased the richness and lustre of his tints. But his gains in this way were not entirely clear. In the hurry and excitement of his task, he often worked over his surface before the under colours were dry; and as in laying on his colours he used various kinds of medium, or vehicle, to attain brilliancy and depth of tone, many of his pictures have suffered by contracting, cracking, and separating—are now but the dim ghosts of themselves—the battle flag, shot-torn, smoke-stained, as compared with the original silken sheet. An incomplete draughtsman, Thomson had yet fine general ideas of form and the effect of grand lines. His works are always bold, picturesque, vigorous, and they never fail to impress the imagina-

tion. He is always great in masses, and having by that means touched the soul of the spectator, he allows the spectator to supply the details. He pours himself, so to speak, on the key of the position in gloomy brigades of strength, and, having won that, is satisfied—he does not waste himself in skirmishing, however brilliant. There is no play in his pictures. The truth is, he was always a little divided in his allegiance between nature and the Poussins. He was all for nature in his sketch in the open air, he was all for Poussin while working in his studio. His pictures, with their incontestable fine qualities, are just a little too *like* pictures. Nature smells of oil, somehow. Bold and noble as was his imagination, able to cope with scenes of gloom and piled-up rocky wildness, he lacked a tender sense of beauty and an exquisiteness of colour. His picture of the Trosachs, in the Scottish National Gallery, is ugly almost, the hills are lumpy and unrelieved by the grace of twinkling birch woods; and there are no distant peaks, as in nature, softened by miles of airy azure. Light, which laughs and plays, and sleeps smilingly when it *does* sleep, is sad hearted in this work as a mute at a funeral. In colour, again, Thomson, although often grand and imposing in a broad general way, is seldom what can be called exquisite—the world with a sun shining upon it is not cloaked in drabs, russets, dark greens, and blacks, as the artist loved to attire her. Thomson's pictures have many of them lost their pristine brilliancy and freshness, but even when straight from his hand one can hardly conceive them to be other than deficient in this respect.

The stranger entering the Scottish National Gallery, after he has passed Tintoretto's "Venetian Senators," Vandyck's "Italian Nobleman in Armour,"—who seems one of "God's spies," watching every person in the room, listening to every word they utter—and the seven or eight glowing Ettys, will probably seek the works of the first great master of Scottish landscape. There are seven of them, four the bequests of the late Professor Pillans. "Bruce's Castle of Turnberry," a sunset, grand, and sombre, but cracked through the use of some pestilent vehicle, will give some idea of what Thomson was at his best. While "The Frith of Clyde, with Benlomond in the distance," "Ravensheuch Castle, near Kirkcaldy, Sunset," are beautiful reminiscences of that richness and depth of tone which distinguished this artist's works while they were fresh from his hand. And having satisfied himself with these, if he will step across the room and study Mr. Horatio Macculloch's "Inverlochy Castle," he will see what progress in the painting of landscape has been made in Scotland during the last twenty years—how far it has receded from Claude and the Poussins, how much closer it has come to nature.

ALEXANDER SMITH.



POETRY ON TWELVE SHILLINGS A-WEEK.

AMONG the countless "copies of verses" sent to *The Argosy*, there reached us last month a few pages entitled "Fairy Revels." These verses had a freshness as of early flowers; there was a happy music in their rhyme, and their theme was so graceful and so gay that it seemed as if they must be the production of some young poet, with the spring-time working in his blood. And yet it was no "new poet" who had written "Fairy Revels," but, as we have since learned, an old man who has borne the burden of half a century of poverty and toil.

About thirteen years ago, when more than forty years of his life had passed in labour which at no time yielded him more than twelve shillings a-week, the passing of a stranger through a field in which the poet was reaping brought about the first recognition of his genius. Born before the days of National and British Schools, a good mother taught him to read, and by dint of buying and borrowing, principally the latter, he made acquaintance with the English poets, and learnt the art of song. He says:—"I well remember taking Shakspeare in sixpenny numbers when I was working for seven shillings a-week, and had to maintain myself and pay for lodgings; and even then I regretted not the loss of a day's work in wet weather (scanty as my earnings were) if I could spend it in reading. I have sat up many nights reading Milton when others have been sleeping, and passed many, many hours with Shakspeare when perhaps I should have been otherwise employed. And thus my youth passed away, with but few enjoyments in the estimation of those around me, whose company I shunned, preferring the solitary walk in fields or lanes to the noise and laughter of the streets,—calm communion with silent nature to the mad excitement of intoxication,—and the lay of the nightingale to the song of the drunkard. In all my lonely musings I had bread to eat that they knew not of: from a boy I loved the trees and flowers, woods and waters, and have conversed more with them than with men. I loved all that was beautiful in nature; and, if I cannot express myself as a poet, *I have always felt as one.*"

Of his power of expression the reader may judge for himself.

FAIRY REVELS: A FRAGMENT.

Now the full moon climbs the sky,
And hinds in heavy slumber lie;
The bleating sheep are penn'd at rest,
Their fleeces on the daisies press'd;
And all around is hush'd and still,
Except the tinkling of the rill,
And songs of wakeful nightingales
Floating o'er the dewy vales.
Now is the time we fairies meet,
And dance our rounds with noiseless feet.

Hie thee! my attendant sprite,
To yonder mead with kingcups bright,

And bring me from the cowslip pale
A freckled flower, called a male.
There is music in that flower,
And children know its magic power,
For late I in a primrose lay,
Where a group had met to play;
One had pluck'd the wild white rose,
And wreathed her fair unwrinkled brows;
Another, round her flaxen head,
Wore bindweed blossoms, white and
red;
A third had cull'd the light blue-bell,
And it became her beauty well;

Another's dark and glossy hair
 Was intermixed with lilies fair ;
 And all were happy, all were gay,
 Though mortal creatures form'd of clay.
 How they laugh'd, and danced, and sang,
 Till the answering echoes rang ;
 One, the merriest of them all,
 Toss'd and caught a cowslip ball,
 Till, warm and wearied, down she sank
 In softest moss upon the bank ;
 And from that globe of fragrant flowers
 She pluck'd a tube of wonderous powers,
 And biting off its slender tip,
 With swollen cheek and pouting lip,
 She blew its trumpet sound so clear,
 It charm'd and won my listening ear :
 And much I wished that each could be
 Always, as then, from sorrow free,
 Exempt from suff'ring, care, and sin,
 They seemed to us so near akin.
 That flower shall now our trumpet be,
 Sound it loudly, three times three.

SONG.

Awake, awake, ye fairies all,
 Come at the cowslip trumpet's call ;
 Come from the rose, where all day ye sleep,
 Come from the banks where the wild vines
 creep,
 Come from the foxglove's painted cells,
 Come from the lily's waxen bells,
 Come from the tubes of the sweet woodbine,
 Come from the leaves of the eglantine.
 Awake, awake, ye fairies all,
 Come at the cowslip trumpet's call.

Ye that couch in the gorse and broom,
 Ye that hide in the clover's bloom,
 Ye that peep from the pansy's hood,
 Ye that shroud in the dark green wood,
 On sycamores with honey wet,
 Or willows by the rivulet,

Awake, ye elves and fairies all,
 Come at the cowslip trumpet's call.

From the plaits of the daisy's frill,
 From the folds of the daffodil,
 From the May buds on the thorn,
 From the larkspurs in the corn,
 From the cockles white and red,
 From the wild thyme's fragrant bed,

Awake, arise, ye fairies all,
 Come at the cowslip trumpet's call.

Ye that in the tulips lie,
 Rocking as the winds go by,
 Ye that in the harebells swing,
 Or to the sturdy orchis cling,

Ye that sleep in the leafy bowers,
 Curtain'd by the lilac's flowers,
 Hasten o'er the spangled green,
 To the summons of your queen.

You my trusty guards attend,
 And this sacred place defend.
 Here is armour tried and true,
 Helmets of the monkshood blue,
 Lances keen and pointed spear
 On the thistle standing near :
 And for shields, my champions bold,
 Daisy disks embossed with gold.
 Whilst this mystic ring we dance
 Let no noxious thing advance,
 Newt, or toad, or beetle black,
 Snail with castle on his back,
 Bloated spider, sly and grim,
 Earwig gaunt, or earthworm slim,
 Slimy slug, or centipede,
 Or caterpillar, ravenous breed.
 Emmets pinched, and small green lice,
 Mining moles, and pilfering mice,
 Prowling, lurking, green-eyed cats,
 Weasels fierce, and whisker'd rats,
 Thorny hedgehog, scaly snake,
 Hiding under fern and brake,
 Chase them, keep them far away,
 While we feast, and dance, and play.
 Sweetly blow your breathing flutes,
 Softly touch your tinkling lutes,
 Mellow flutes from oaten sheaves,
 Lutes of stringed plantain leaves,
 Clarionets of knotted reeds,
 Kettledrums of poppy seeds ;
 Hand in hand the measure tread,
 O'er the bending cowslip's head,
 With springing toe and lightsome heel,
 In and out in mazy reel ;
 Thus we sing, and dance, and play
 Till the blushing dawn of day.

Come, the banquet now prepare ;
 Bring the viands rich and rare,
 Here's a mushroom, white and round,
 Peeping from the heaving ground—
 Now I touch it with my wand,
 See its swelling globe expand ;
 Now its stalk is shooting up,
 Now it opes its pinky cup,—
 This shall be our festive board,
 Here shall sup our merry horde.

Here are kingcups, bright with gold,
 Bowls of acorns, carved and old,
 Tankards of primroses pale,
 Stoups of lilies of the vale,

Nettle flagons, ivory white,
 Chalice of silver bright,
 That in shady thickets gleam,
 Or shine like stars beside the stream,
 Flasks of purple columbine,
 Filled with liquor crystalline,
 Whatsoe'r the wild bee sips
 Is not gross for fairy lips.
 Let the vessels all be fill'd
 With pearly dew by night distill'd,
 And honey wrung from sweetest flowers,
 From hills and valleys woods and bowers,
 Candied drops from bluebells deep
 Tears the blue-eyed violets weep,
 Aroma by roses shed,
 Spices from the wild thyme's bed,

Ruddy drops from bleeding cherries,
 Juices crush'd from swelling berries,
 Nectar press'd from purple plums,
 Pulp of peaches, amber gums,
 Temper well and mix the whole
 In our acorn wassail bowl.

Sit we now upon the grass,
 Quaff the cup and let it pass;
 Freely drink and do not fear,
 No inebriate fumes are here.

Hark, I hear the booming chime
 By which dull mortals measure time;
 And the high ascending moon
 Tells that night is at its noon.

Nor is there wanting in our peasant poet a keen sense of humour, as witness:—

TEA-TABLE TALK.

In a garden nook, by a wide-spreading yew,
 A stingy old Nettle and Dockweed once grew;
 They were sipping the dew, and between you and me,
 They mixed it with scandal as ladies do tea.

"I can't think, my dear Dock," the old Nettle began,
 "Why the Rose has been always a favourite with man;
 Her breath's very sweet, we all must allow it,
 And true she has beauty, at least folks avow it;
 But then she's so vain, she thinks all must adore her,
 And that such as we ought to fall down before her.
 Her greatest delight's, you may see by her eye,
 To be fondled and kissed by each fop passing by;
 And her dress is the oddest that ever was seen,
 She wears throughout July a moss victorine!"

"Whilst little Miss Snowdrop," replied Madam Dock,
 "Comes out in the frost in a white muslin frock;
 And though she's so modest, and hangs down her head,
 Young Crocus and she were caught both in one bed.
 And that little minx too, so sickly and pale,
 You know who I mean, dear, Miss Lill of the Vale,
 So shy and retired, all her company shun,
 So modest and humble you'd think her a nun;
 Yet her I once saw, and it augured no good,
 Tête-à-tête in a nook with old solemn Monkshood.
 Then there's Madam Poppy, so vulgar and red,
 How gaily and gaudy she dresses her head;
 She always looks sleepy, and most people think,
 And I quite believe it, she's given to drink.
 You know Mrs. Pansy, with dark velvet hood,
 And a face like to some you see carved out in wood;
 I hear that she's lately come out in great state,
 And has wholly forgotten the old garden gate.
 Do you hear if Miss Dahlia has got a new dress,
 To appear at the show? Why she cannot do less;

And though she has dresses of every hue,
 She is sighing and pining to have one of blue.
 Madam Tulip last Sunday was splendidly dressed ;
 But then, dear, her character's none of the best.
 She is painted and powdered, but smell of her breath,
 I am sure it will make you sick nigh unto death."

"Well, now then, I'll tell you a capital joke,"
 Mrs. Nettle replied, and she laughed as she spoke ;
 "Here's old Dolly Daisy, that lives in the dell,
 Has a daughter who's gone with my lady to dwell ;
 She calls herself now by a high-sounding name,
 You would scarcely believe that from field-work she came.
 She'd a sister, you know, overturned by the plough,
 When Bobby Burns blubbered and made such a row.
 And there's those Geraniums, a proud idle set ;
 Whilst we are abroad in the cold and the wet,
 They dress themselves out in pink, scarlet, and white,
 And stare out at the windows from morning till night.
 Those delicate gentry that come from abroad—
 I know they are glad of their bed and their board—
 They boast of the sunshine of Naples and Rome,
 If they don't like our climate, why not stay at home ?
 Our land's overrun by such strangers as these,
 By singers and dancers and poor refugees :
 Only think how our language is broken and maul'd,
 And to hear now what jaw-twisting names they are called ;
 But I will be bound if their right names were known,
 They'd be something as common as Smith, Jones, and Brown.
 But 'tis time to be going ; the moon's shining bright,
 And I cannot bear scandal. Good night, ma'am, good night."

On how dark a background of poverty and misery this bright and cherry
 humour could play, may be seen in the following verses :—

WRITTEN FROM NEWMARKET UNION.

(*To my Sister at Cambridge, 1846.*)

Since I cannot, dear sister, with you hold communion,
 I'll give you a sketch of our life in the Union.
 But how to begin I don't know, I declare :
 Let me see ; well, the first is our grand bill of fare.
 We've skilly for breakfast ; at night bread-and-cheese,
 And we eat it and then go to bed, if we please.
 Two days in the week we have puddings for dinner,
 And two we have broth, so like water, but thinner ;
 Two meat and potatoes, of this none to spare,
 One day bread-and-cheese—and so much for our fare.
 And now then my clothes I will try to portray,
 They're made of coarse cloth and the colour is grey.
 My jacket and waistcoat don't fit me at all ;
 My shirt is too short, or I am too tall ;
 A sort of Scotch bonnet we wear on our heads ;
 And I sleep in a room where are just fourteen beds.
 Some are sleeping, some snoring, some talking, some playing,
 Some fighting, some swearing, but very few praying.

Here are nine at a time who work at the mill,
 We take it by turns, so it never stands still :
 A half hour each gang, 'so 'tis not very hard,
 And when we are off we can walk in the yard.
 We have nurseries here where the children are crying,
 And hospitals too for the sick and the dying.
 I sometimes look up to the bit of blue sky,
 High over my head, with a tear in my eye.
 Surrounded by walls that are too high to climb,
 Confined as a felon without any crime,
 Not a field, nor a house, nor a hedge can I see,
 Not a plant, not a flower, not a bush, nor a tree,
 Nought except a geranium or two that appear
 At the governor's window, to smile even here.

And in such a dismal prison-house as this, the author of "Fairy Revels" might, but for the intervention of friends, end his days. A London Publisher, has undertaken to bring out a small collection of his poems, and it is hoped that the sale of the volume may at least avert a fate so hard.

EDITOR

MY CHINESE NEIGHBOURS

BY AN AUSTRALIAN SETTLER.

EMIGRATION has at no period been popular among the Chinese, and the present century was well advanced before any decided exodus can be said to have taken place from the "Flowery Land." And as this dislike to leave home was no sooner overcome than they had to bear the brunt of great prejudice and opposition from settlers in the districts to which they went, it is not a little to the credit of the national character of the Chinese that they have proved themselves successful emigrants.

In Victoria the pride and prejudice of "race" displayed itself against the Chinese emigrants to an extreme degree. They had, in fact, to struggle with persecutions sufficient to have daunted the energies and depressed the spirit of any less adventurous people; and though much of this hostile reception may have been provoked by their native obstinacy, it undoubtedly derived its strongest impulse from the very general aversion of the colonists to a Tartar influx.

The gold-fields at that period were overrun by adventurers of nearly every race and character; but the Chinese, landing chiefly at Guichen Bay, South Australia, and travelling overland, in order to avoid the heavy poll-tax levied by Government, were soon found to preponderate. Isolated and united among themselves by close and secret associations, these people naturally became objects of dislike, and this their peculiar social condition but served to confirm.

The Chinese following in the wake of diggers who had wrought and abandoned the ground, at first confined their labour to washing the drift and pipeclay lying on the top of the "claim" and running through the surfacing. Thus, without developing the ground, they helped to exhaust the field; and

this, combined with petty offences of a criminal nature, evoked a very general and determined hostility on the part of the miners, which finally caused their expulsion from certain districts. But the increasing poverty of the older gold-fields, concurrently with the discovery made by the unsuccessful or "outsiders" of the value of the "headings" and "tailings," combined to deprive the Chinese of the monopoly they had hitherto enjoyed, and drove them to the development of those dormant energies which they have since so successfully applied to the labours of the gold-field.

The progress of the colony, and the introduction of suitable mining laws, have now, however, rendered these collisions less frequent, and since the appointment of "Chinese protectors" the "Celestials" have rarely been molested. They may be said to have passed through their probation. The chief obstacles to their material progress—their own tendency to isolation—by which European prejudices against them were chiefly fostered, being fast disappearing.

John Chinaman now follows a "rush," marks out a "claim," and goes down two or three hundred feet with a zeal and intrepidity that would have astonished him in the early days of his experience at the mines. Nor is he at all behind in wet-sinking-slabbing, and timbering his shaft. Both he does with a neatness and skill equal to the European miner. That he is fit for difficult alluvial operations, is shown by his taking up large tracts of abandoned ground on old diggings, and working them with highly satisfactory results. He has also opened new fields, whose wealth might have remained undiscovered for years to come but for his careful explorations for "surface ground," a pursuit which, in a quiet and likely-looking country, presents to him unusual attractions.

It was in this way the important mines of Ararat were developed. The Chinese were in force at Armstrongs, and also at Cathcart (diggings which had been worked years previously). Some of them spread around the mount and up to the "Gap," others crossed the range, and the great-western gold-field of Victoria was the splendid result of their perseverance, rewarding the pioneers by some of the richest claims. Besides the Canton Lead at Ararat, the Stony Creek, Burrandong, Burnt Creek New Lead, Chinaman's Flat, and a number of minor fields, were severally discovered by Chinese prospectors.

A good number are believed to have realized an independence and retired to the Flowery Land; but of late the successful have shown a preference for colonial enterprise. In this spirit of progress, a taste for "coaching" pursuits has recently manifested itself among the community, and the Mongolian Jehu may be seen handling the ribbons with the skill and *sang froid* of his predecessor, the Canadian, or Blue-Nose, who bowled his four-in-hand through the immense forests and along the up-country lines of route inaccessible by rail. Some have valuable horse-teams, transporting goods from the metropolis to the diggings, or conveying their less fortunate brethren across country to some seductive locality. Others again are to be seen in stores stocked with all kinds of oriental and colonial merchandize, or perhaps superintending some thirty or forty of their own countrymen in a mining venture on the deep leads of Ballarat, or cutting through the old flats and gullies of Mount Alexander, the alluvium of which, to a considerable depth, they put through

steam and horse machinery. Most of the up-country traders are supplied by Chinese merchants in town, many of whom are also shipowners, and import large stocks from the eastern markets. One of the largest of these is the firm of "Kong Meng and Co.," whose house has been established about eleven years. Little Bourke-street is the principal quarter of the Chinese in Melbourne. Here also is situated the "Chinese Exchange," which was established chiefly for the commercial intercourse of the traders of the Sam Yup district, near Canton, who number between four and five hundred. Some again display their skill in local manufactures and in the construction of numerous fancy articles. A large proportion have devoted attention both to agriculture and gardening; and in the latter pursuit, their skilful culture, patience, and close economy, have given them a monopoly of the market—the greater part of the numerous mining townships being almost exclusively supplied by "Chinese vegetable merchants."

The frequency of minor offences among the Chinese, it is believed, may be traced to their peculiar position on the gold-fields. Few resources are available to them, if they are unsuccessful in mining, from their being completely ignorant of European languages and customs. It is under the pressure of want—and the privations of the Chinese at times are extreme—that generally speaking they commit those petty offences against property, for which they are notorious. One of the most dreaded punishments to which they are subjected in the penal discipline of the colony is the docking of their pig-tails. The Chinese, on the other hand, fully appreciate the colonial administration of justice, and promptly appeal to the law in cases of appropriation of their mining ground, or encroachment on it; in either of which cases they claim the intermediate aid of the interpreter.

The latter is a personage of considerable importance on the gold-fields. Handsomely remunerated, and holding a recognized official position, the stylishly-attired, anglicized Mongol directs his aggrieved countrymen with phlegmatic order and complacency. Possessed of the litigant's confidence, he is enabled to introduce a client to his lawyer (with whom it often happens that an *entente cordiale* is established), and John Chinaman may be seen with his "boss" ahead, figuring at court, and supported by an array of tail testimony, prosecuting his claim with the assurance of a man conscious of the justice of his cause. He gravely takes his oath by blowing out a candle, smashing a plate, or cutting off a cock's head, whichever process is the most binding on his conscience. The interpreter, however, has virtually the disposition of the cause in his own hands, and sometimes sacrifices his employer's interests to his own, perverting and altering the true purport of the evidence to the Court, so that John retires vanquished and crestfallen, wondering at the injustice of the British law, and disgusted with the stupidity of the English barbarian.

The numerical strength of the Chinese in Victoria may be stated at over one-fourth of the total mining population. Their immigration into the colony commenced in 1853, and by the following year about two thousand had settled there. This number, during the next three years, increased to thirty thousand; in 1858 their numbers throughout the year averaged thirty-five thousand, in 1859 forty-two thousand, and in 1860 they again fell to thirty-five

thousand ; but the several attractions of Lambing Flat and Burrandong, in New South Wales, drew away ten or eleven thousand during this and the following years, leaving the population throughout the past three years, in round numbers, at twenty-four thousand.

The distinctions of social grade, peculiar to the Chinese, are gradually developing their more prominent characteristics, both in native society in Melbourne and on the principal gold-fields. The great bulk of the Chinese present a physiognomy that is strikingly uniform and uninteresting, defying the attempts of Europeans at individual identification. But among the "bosses" of society there is a very perceptible difference, both in intelligence and *physique*, betokening a decidedly superior caste, and the distinction is heightened by their respective habits and style of dress.

It is not, however, the elaborate and highly-finished costume—half Oriental, half European—affected by the wealthier classes, that affords the best indication of native rank. Great importance is attached to facial distinctions, and to the embellishment and fineness of the "tail," while the nicest attention is bestowed on the growth and preservation of the finely-tipped horny appendages of the hand which, to the outside barbarian, resemble claws rather than finger-nails.

Apropos of the importance the Chinese attach to the possession of long hair, a characteristic incident occurred at one of the townships at the diggings. A Chinaman was detected making off with a pair of boots, which he was suspected of stealing from the front of a store. Pursuit was given, and the delinquent soon overtaken. His broad sombrero having fallen off in his flight, his tail was released from its confinement, and streamed out horizontally behind. This his pursuer caught at, when to his astonishment the coveted appendage remained in his hands, while the owner was scudding away under a "bare poll."

The physical capacity of the Chinese in general corresponds with their inferior stature, though upon the gold-fields a number of sinewy, broad-shouldered individuals are to be met with who appear equal to any amount of fatigue. With a stout bamboo pole slung across the shoulder, and occasionally shifted with a kind of "hitch" round the back of the neck, they will sustain the whole burden of their mining implements and camp appendages. Cradle, buckets, shovels, ropes, and tent baggage, on the one side, will be balanced by a puddling tub or heavy windlass barrel on the other (an aggregate weight of perhaps two hundred pounds); and they may be seen travelling in single file, at their uniform sling trot, upon a journey of some seventy or eighty miles, from one mining locality to another. At the time of the Armstrongs "rush," I passed a string of over two hundred of these people, extending in a line for about a third of a mile. Each carried a heavily-weighted bamboo, and laughed and joked as he trotted barefooted along the slushy road.

In migrating to a fresh locality, while jealously isolating themselves from the "barbarian," they generally select an eligible spot as a common camping place, pitching their tents close to each other, and encircling the whole encampment with a brush-fence, or *chevaux-de-frise* of wattle and gum. These encampments are to be seen thickly dotted over the leading fields of each mining division, having their own quarter or commissariat near the centre.

The Burnt Creek settlement in the Maryborough division, is, perhaps, one of their most prominent "townships" up country, and during their celebration of the Feast of the New Year, which is observed with great ceremony and display, this place presents a novel appearance to the European, and attracts many visitors. In company with several others, I explored "Hong Kong" in the summer of 1863. It then contained a population varying from two to three thousand. Lying on the trans-Loddon route to Dunolly and the remote north-western gold-fields, it occupies the upper end of a large flat that may be said to have been systematically "burrowed" by the Mongolians, who have had a settlement at Burnt Creek since 1854. It is sheltered by a succession of alluvial hills that gradually stretch away to the west until they unite with the Black Ranges. Among the buildings which border each side of the principal street of the camp, we noticed gambling saloons, and opium and smoking rooms; shops of jewellers, gold buyers, and coach proprietors; clothing, fish, fruit, and provision stores, the contents of the latter being most temptingly displayed. An elaborate barber's shop, built of shingles and fancifully ornamented, occupied a prominent site, where the "professor" might be seen carefully shaving the hair off the face, neck, and forehead of a celestial dandy, or perhaps tickling his ears. Here also a pretentious and venerable Esculapius dispensed his astringent medicines. His diploma, if it measured the length of his tail, was unexceptionable, though seemingly it was not appreciated. A cobbler vigorously plying his craft in a tent about five feet square, professed to make "very good shoe;" and in the building adjoining might be observed a round, plethoric individual intently occupied in the development of some fancy "jumper," or other showy Mongolian garment.

Restaurateurs abounded, the most of whom displayed, hanging in rows suspended from a horizontal pole, an infinity of long porcine shreds, which to a suspicious observer looked like so many rats' tails grilling in the sun, although the whole animal was seen temptingly garnished with mandarin orange and perfumed seeds. Here, too, in all the glitter of Chinese ornamentation, which ranges from small gilded emblems to imposing globular lanterns, was their temple of worship, or "Joss House," which is a prominent feature in a Chinese township, even the smallest encampment possessing one. The building, which we were permitted to enter, was draped in crimson cloth, highly ornamented and lavishly inscribed with Chinese characters. Surmounting an altar erected in the centre of the room, was the idol or goddess of the temple, "Que Sin," to propitiate whom, offerings of wheat, wine, and fruit were deposited in jars and baskets around the altar in profusion. The fetish-like image—possessing the grotesque characteristics of all Chinese idols—was decked out with various coloured articles,—gold bands, peacocks' feathers, and Dutch metal entering largely into the composition of its attire. In this instance the beautiful tail feathers of the *lyre bird* adorned the head-dress of the goddess, the whole presenting a curious combination, the bizarre appearance of which was heightened by a large robe bearing various devices in crimson and gold. Immediately surrounding the figure were numerous wax tapers, joss sticks, incense burners, and Chinese saucers, while suspended from the ceiling were small transparent lanterns for evening illumination.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, in which all evinced a lively desire to

"chin chin" Joss, we were invited to taste some of the highly-prized "saqui"—a Buddhist inspiration, which takes the form of a strongly-spiritualized cordial—an invitation which a lady friend of ours was prevailed upon to accept. Some native brandy—a kind of arrack—very hot and unpalatable, was then introduced, along with a few hard and flavourless seed cakes, and a peculiar conserve, chiefly remarkable for the stone it contained.

After examining these offerings and ornaments, we left the building, and directed our steps towards a gambling saloon. The propensity for games of chance among the Chinese is proverbial. While they are almost entirely free from the vice of intoxication, the passion for gambling pervades all classes of society.

The building to which we went contained about a hundred people, and was furnished with half a dozen high square tables, equally distributed down the two sides of the room. There was no attempt at privacy or seclusion. Selecting one of the tables for observation, we found the banker, who was disposed à la Turk at the upper end, with a heap of "counters" raked in front of him. The quantity contained in this heap is varied at frequent intervals, the interest of the game being centred in the number left piled on the table.

There are two prizes: success being dependent upon guessing correctly at the actual and next lowest number contained in the heap, and failing the former, of the two next lower numbers; the first prize being one-half, and the second or lowest of the two numbers, one-fourth of the receipts. Those who guessed over or wide of the actual number (of course the greater proportion) forfeited their stakes to the croupier. Great dexterity was displayed by the latter in the manipulation of the numerous counters, with a short stick held between the two fore-fingers. Sometimes John, with increasing confidence in his judgment, would double or triple the ordinary sum bet, in which case he would of course be entitled to *pro rata* returns. The whole affair was of the most transparent character, devoid of subtlety or point. The aspect of the various groups, the excited gamblers loudly disputing and reaching over each other round the table, their feverish earnestness during the process of counting, while convulsively toying with the tails which fantastically wreathed their respective heads and necks, and the delirium of success occasionally depicted on the countenance of some winner, altogether presented a curious spectacle.

Adjoining this place was an opium and smoking saloon, where the devotees to this pernicious custom were reclining at full length in berths ranged one above the other round the room, and enclosed with curtains. To a European the atmosphere of the room was in itself a soporific.

The various stages of the opium smoker were here presented at one view. Voluble and excited, a number were laughing and talking incoherently as we entered, while others were fast merging into the wished-for state of unconsciousness, the countenance the while wearing an expression of imbecility. By way of pipe a narrow reed is used—having a brass bowl at one end, with a small hole in it for the reception of the opium. The drug is prepared and scented, and a small quantity only is inhaled—the smoke being taken into the lungs.

Surrendering to the influence of the drug, the smoker professes to experience an absorbing delight, the charm of which is indescribable. But the

pernicious effects of the practice are fearfully apparent in the confirmed devotee. The suffering which accompanies the reaction is not unfrequently attended with the most calamitous results. Suicide, a very prevalent crime among the Chinese, often follows excessive indulgence in this narcotic. The Chinese set a slight value upon life, and the fate which they so rashly anticipate has fewer terrors for them than impending poverty and want. It may here be also stated that, although they associate closely for mutual protection, they are in their relations with each other treacherous and distrustful. And their conduct towards their suffering countrymen when stricken down by disease is at once cowardly and inhuman.

On coming into the main street again the noise of musicians and peripatetic vendors resounded on all sides. Our proximity to an eating-house induced a visit to a portly Celestial rejoicing in the appellation of "Sun Fat," whose gastronomic talent was of no mean order, judging by the thirty or forty unctuous and gratified countenances which greeted our entrance. Invited by the obliging restaurateur to taste some of his productions, we complied, and of course acknowledged their excellence. One dish we were told consisted of eggs, sugar, and flour, with small layers of fat pork disposed in the centre. Another "chou'a" was composed of strings of pork, fowls, rice, and flour, all mixed up together, and crisped on the top. "Bang," another dish, was a material covered with seeds, and to the eye bore an unpleasant resemblance to thin glue. Fowls, sucking pigs, and sweetened strings of pork, made up the remainder of the bill of fare. Small Chinese cups were then handed round containing a little pale-coloured tea, upon which boiling water was poured; after a short infusion the decoction was to be drunk, but upon tasting it, the unsophisticated beverage was entirely opposed to our notions of the proper flavour. Lastly, we were presented with a small quantity of Chinese plums, and carrying a disinfectant in the shape of a pocket-flask of cognac, we offered a portion of its contents to our host, who pronounced it "welly good," and after handing it to one or two other "pigtales" we took our departure, tendering the customary "ho-ki."

The Chinese circus next claimed our attention. It is a favourite evening resort of the Celestials, who, at the sound of the tom-toms, hurry to the centre of attraction from all points of the ranges, guiding their steps by the light of small oil lanterns, which at a distance have the appearance of so many fire-flies flitting about the dark "leads." The entertainment consisted of Chinese acting, and gymnastic and acrobatic performances, periodically enlivened by a grand discharge of "crackers."

The "tumbling" was excellent, and was in fact the only redeeming part of the evening's amusement. We were, however, obliged to withdraw before it was concluded, the "dramatic" uproar, and the suddenly redoubled exertions of the excited operators on the gongs, perilling our tympanums.

Passing into the Dunolly road our attention was attracted by a number of very fine children—half-castes. Several of the more wealthy Chinese have married white women, and thus perhaps taken the most effectual step towards relieving themselves of the social ban under which the community have for a long time suffered.

There are no female Celestials at the diggings, and it is even doubtful

whether the odd specimen or two, popularly believed to have been in Melbourne for some years past, had any other than a mythical existence. The introduction of Chinese ladies into Victoria, however, has become an accomplished fact; an importation of three or four almond-eyed damsels having recently taken place.

There is little doubt but that as the gold-fields at present available to them are gradually narrowed by the superior energy of the European, and by the absorption of the old ground by leasing companies, they will form an important element in the future of the colony. With a natural taste for the cultivation of most ground products, quick at receiving instruction, and thoroughly acclimatised, their services will prove invaluable in connection with those enterprises to which attention has of late been directed,—the culture of the tobacco-plant, the vine, and the olive.

THE ROUND OF PLAY.

THE horse and cart are put away ;
 The wooden hack has run his course ;
 The tail and mane have gone astray
 Of our abandoned rocking-horse.
 We've bought the kite—the bran-new kite :
 A bright red sun is on its breast :
 We pay out string to any height,
 And hold it tugging to the West.
 It drops—as falls the sundown wind :
 We wind the string about the stick.
 Now woe to him who lags behind,
 Whether it be Will or Dick.
 Our coach is ready for the start ;
 Our leaders chew the wooden bit :—
 May they as bravely bear their part,
 Nor by a heavier arm be hit,
 In days to come. So now, a sport
 About the measured bounds of play !
 Mind, leader in the Scottish skirt,
 That Garibaldi's in the way !
 No, no ! To stables ! Wipe them down :
 A plague upon the mimic course !
 String reins I leave to junior Brown :
 Papa has bought a real horse.
 Go, babies, with your kites and tops—
 Late partners in our pots of honey :
 We leave our cress and mustard crops
 Aside. And mark us ride our pony !
 We ride into the real world :
 Go—with the tart-man shilly-shally :
 Know that our childhood's flag is furled :
 We've done with that campaign called
 " ali."

Shut the playground gate behind us,
 With rough men we have to reckon :
 Soon the startled world shall find us
 Place—where Fame and Cupid beckon.
 Lagging crowds shall fail and stumble,
 While we shall issue stern commands.
 Fame, with look abash'd and humble,
 Shall drop her laurel in our hands.
 Pass ! baubles of the full-grown man :
 Ye stars of valour—wreaths of laurel !
 Hot-blooded youth, pass to the van—
 Then over shares of glory quarrel.
 The riband warms the brave man's breast ;
 The laurel heats the scholar's brow :—
 But time cools both—and peace and rest
 Are all the playthings I crave now.
 Save, grandchild prattling at my knee,
 Beginning the old round once more.
 " I'll buy the horse and cart for thee,
 We mend the broken battledore ;
 And if my hands can steady be,
 I'll wind the string, and wind it tight—
 And through my spectacles may see
 The bright red sun upon the kite.
 " And then—but no, my flaxen boy ;
 Then comes the pony saddled new—
 And pride's the play—and maid's the toy :—
 My head shall be beneath the dew.
 Perhaps about that time you'll say
 To some young chum : ' Grand-dad I
 knew—
 A gentleman who fought his way.'
 And be it so, my lad, with you."

W. BLANCHARD JERKOLD.

GRIFFITH GAUNT.

BY CHARLES READE.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HE went straight to the stable, and saddled Black Dick.

But, in the very act, his nature revolted. What, turn his back on her the moment he had got hold of her money, to take to the other. He could not do it.

He went back to her room, and came so suddenly that he caught her crying. He asked her what was the matter.

"Nothing," said she, with a sigh: "only a woman's foolish misgivings. I was afraid perhaps you would not come back. Forgive me."

"No fear of that," said he. "However, I have taken a resolve not to go to-day. If I go to-morrow, I shall be just in time; and Dick wants a good day's rest."

Mrs. Gaunt said nothing; but her expressive face was triumphant.

Griffith and she took a walk together; and he, who used to be the more genial of the two, was dull, and she full of animation.

This whole day she laid herself out to bewitch her husband, and put him in high spirits.

It was uphill work; but, when such a woman sets herself in earnest to delight a man, she reads our sex a lesson in the art; that shows us we are all babies at it.

However, it was at supper she finally conquered.

Here the lights, her beauty set off with art, her deepening eyes, her satin skin, her happy excitement, her wit and tenderness, and joyous sprightliness, enveloped Griffith in an atmosphere of delight, and drove everything out of his head but herself: and with this, if the truth must be told, the sparkling wines co-operated.

Griffith plied the bottle a little too freely. But Mrs. Gaunt, on this one occasion, had not the heart to check him. The more he toasted her, the more uxorious he became, and she could not deny herself even this joy; but, besides, she had less of the prudent wife in her just then, than of the weak indulgent mother. Anything rather than check his love: she was greedy of it.

At last, however, she said to him, "Sweetheart, I shall go to bed: for, I see, if I stay longer, I shall lead thee into a debauch. Be good now; drink no more when I am gone. Else I'll say thou lovest thy bottle more than thy wife."

He promised faithfully. But, when she was gone, modified his pledge by drinking just one bumper to her health: which bumper let in another: and, when at last he retired to rest, he was in that state of mental confusion wherein the limbs appear to have a memory independent of the mind.

In this condition do some men's hands wind up their watches, the mind taking no appreciable part in the ceremony.

By some such act of what physicians call "organic memory," Griffith's feet carried him to the chamber he had slept in a thousand times, and not into the one Mrs. Ryder had taken him to the night before.

The next morning he came down rather late for him, and found himself treated with a great access of respect by the servants.

His position was no longer doubtful; he was the master of the house.

Mrs. Gaunt followed in due course, and sat at breakfast with him, looking young and blooming as Hebe, and her eye never off him long.

She had lived temperately, and had not yet passed the age when happiness can restore a woman's beauty and brightness in a single day.

As for him, he was like a man in a heavenly dream: he floated in the past and the present: the recent and the future seemed obscure and distant, and comparatively in a mist.

But that same afternoon, after a most affectionate farewell, and many promises to return as soon as ever he had discharged his obligations, Griffith Gaunt started for the "Packhorse," to carry to Mercy Leicester, alias Vint, the money Catherine Gaunt had saved by self-denial and economy.

And he went south a worse man than he came.

When he left Mercy Leicester, he was a bigamist in law, but not at heart. Kate was dead to him: he had given her up for ever: and was constant and true to his new wife.

But now he was false to Mercy, yet not true to Kate; and, curiously enough, it was a day or two passed with his lawful wife that had demoralized him. His unlawful wife had hitherto done nothing but improve his character.

A great fault once committed is often the first link in a chain of acts, that look like crimes, but are, strictly speaking, consequences.

This man, blinded at first by his own foible, and, after that, the sport of circumstances, was single-hearted by nature; and his conscience was not hardened. He desired earnestly to free himself and both his wives from the cruel situation; but, to do this, one of them he saw must be abandoned entirely; and his heart bled for her.

A villain or a fool would have relished the situation; many men would have dallied with it; but, to do this erring man justice, he writhed and sorrowed under it, and sincerely desired to end it.

And this was why he prized Kate's money so. It enabled him to render a great service to her he had injured worse than he had the other, to her he saw he must abandon.

But this was feeble comfort after all. He rode along a miserable man; none the less wretched and remorseful, that, ere he got into Lancashire, he saw his way clear. This was his resolve: to pay old Vint's debts with Kate's money; take the "Packhorse," get it made over to Mercy; give her the odd two hundred pounds and his jewels, and fly. He would never see her again:

but would return home, and get the rest of the two thousand pounds from Kate, and send it Mercy by a friend, who should tell her he was dead, and had left word with his relations to send her all his substance.

At last the "Packhorse" came in sight. He drew rein, and had half a mind to turn back; but, instead of that, he crawled on, and very sick and cold he felt.

Many a man has marched to the scaffold with a less quaking heart than he to the "Packhorse."

His dejection contrasted strangely with the warm reception he met from everybody there. And the house was full of women; and they seemed, somehow, all cock-a-hoop, and filled with admiration of *him*.

"Where is she?" said he, faintly.

"Hark to the poor soul!" said a gossip. "Dame Vint, where's thy daughter? gone out a-walking belike?"

At this, the other women present chuckled and clucked.

"I'll bring you to her," said Mrs. Vint; "but prithee be quiet and reasonable; for to be sure she is none too strong."

There was some little preparation, and then Griffith was ushered into Mercy's room, and found her in bed, looking a little pale, but sweeter and comelier than ever. She had the bedclothes up to her chin.

"You look wan, my poor lass," said he; "what ails ye?"

"Nought ails me now thou art come," said she, lovingly.

Griffith put the bag on the table. "There," said he, "there's five hundred pounds in gold. I come not to thee empty-handed."

"Nor I to thee," said Mercy, with a heavenly smile. "See!"

And she drew down the bedclothes a little, and showed the face of a babe scarcely three days old: a little boy.

She turned in the bed, and tried to hold him up to his father, and said, "Here's my treasure for thee!" And the effort, the flush on her cheek, and the deep light in her dove-like eyes, told plainly that the poor soul thought she had contributed to their domestic wealth something far richer than Griffith had with his bag of gold.

The father uttered an ejaculation, and came to her side, and, for a moment, Nature overpowered every thing else. He kissed the child; he kissed Mercy again and again.

"Now God be praised for both," said he, passionately; "but most for thee, the best wife, the truest friend——" Here, thinking of her virtues, and the blow he had come to strike her, he broke down, and was almost choked with emotion; whereupon Mrs. Vint exerted female authority, and bundled him out of the room. "Is that the way to carry on at such an a time?" said she. "'Twas enow to upset her altogether. Oh, but you men have little sense in women's matters. I looked to you to give her courage, not to set her off into hysterics after a manner. Nay, keep up her heart, or keep your distance, say I, that am her mother."

Griffith took this hint, and ever after took pity on Mercy's weak condition;

and, suspending the fatal blow, did all he could to restore her to health and spirits.

Of course, to do that, he must deceive her ; and so his life became a lie.

For, hitherto, she had never looked forward much ; but now her eyes were always diving into futurity : and she lay smiling and discussing the prospects of her boy ; and Griffith had to sit by her side, and see her gnaw the boy's hand, and kiss his feet, and anticipate his brilliant career. He had to look and listen with an aching heart, and assent with feigned warmth, and an inward chill of horror and remorse.

One Drummond, a travelling artist, called ; and Mercy, who had often refused to sit to him, consented now : for, she said, when he grows up he shall know how his parents looked in their youth, the very year their darling was born. So Griffith had to sit with her, and excellent likenesses the man produced ; but a horrible one of the child. And Griffith thought, Poor soul ; a little while and this picture will be all that shall be left to thee of me.

For all this time he was actually transacting the preliminaries of separation. He got a man of law to make all sure. The farm, the stock, the furniture and good-will of the "Packhorse," all these he got assigned to Mercy Leicester for her own use, in consideration of three hundred and fifty pounds, whereof three hundred were devoted to clearing the concern of its debts, the odd fifty was to sweeten the pill to Harry Vint.

When the deed came to be executed, Mercy was surprised, and uttered a gentle remonstrance. "What have I to do with it?" said she. "'Tis thy money, not mine."

"No matter," said Griffith ; "I choose to have it so."

"Your will is my law," said Mercy.

"Besides," said Griffith, "the old folk will not feel so sore, nor be afraid of being turned out, if it is in thy name."

"And that is true," said Mercy. "Now who had thought of that, but my good man?" And she threw her arms lovingly round his neck, and gazed on him adoringly.

But his lion-like eyes avoided her dove-like eyes ; and an involuntary shudder ran through him.

The habit of deceiving Mercy led to a consequence he had not anticipated. It tightened the chain that held him. She opened his eyes more and more to her deep affection, and he began to fear she would die if he abandoned her.

And then her present situation was so touching. She had borne him a lovely boy ; that must be abandoned too, if he left her ; and somehow the birth of this child had embellished the mother ; a delicious pink had taken the place of her rustic bloom ; and her beauty was more refined and delicate. So pure, so loving, so fair, so maternal, to wound her heart now, it seemed like stabbing an angel.

One day succeeded to another, and still Griffith had not the heart to carry out his resolve. He temporized ; he wrote to Kate that he was detained by the business ; and he stayed on and on, strengthening his gratitude and his affection, and weakening his love for the absent, and his resolution ; till, at last, he became so distracted and divided in heart, and so demoralized, that

he began to give up the idea of abandoning Mercy, and babbled to himself about fate and destiny, and decided that the most merciful course would be to deceive both women. Mercy was patient. Mercy was unsuspicious. She would content herself with occasional visits, if he could only feign some plausible tale to account for long absences.

Before he got into this mess, he was a singularly truthful person; but now, a lie was nothing to him. But, for that matter, many a man has been first made a liar by his connexion with two women; and by degrees has carried his mendacity into other things.

However, though now blessed with mendacity, he was cursed with a lack of invention; and sorely puzzled how to live at Hernshaw, yet visit the "Packhorse."

The best thing he could hit upon was to pretend to turn bagman; and so Mercy would believe he was travelling all over England, when all the time he was quietly living at Hernshaw.

And perhaps these long separations might prepare her heart for a final parting, and so let in his original plan a few years hence.

He prepared this manœuvre with some art: he told her, one day, he had been to Lancaster, and there fallen in with a friend, who had as good as promised him the place of a commercial traveller for a mercantile house there.

"A traveller!" said Mercy. "Heaven forbid! If you knew how I wearied for you when you went to Cumberland."

"To Cumberland! How know you I went thither?"

"Oh, I but guessed that; but now I know it, by your face. But go where thou wilt, the house is dull directly. Thou art our sunshine. Isn't he, my poppet?"

"Well, well; if it kept me too long from thee, I could give it up. But, child, we must think of young master. You could manage the inn, and your mother the farm, without me; and I should be earning money on my side. I want to make a gentleman of him."

"Anything for *him*," said Mercy: "anything in the world." But the tears stood in her eyes.

In furtherance of this deceit, Griffith did one day actually ride to Lancaster, and slept there. He wrote to Kate, from that town, to say he was detained by a slight illness, but hoped to be home in a week: and the next day brought Mercy home some ribbons, and told her he had seen the merchant, and his brother, and they had made him a very fair offer. "But I've a week to think of it," said he; "so there's no hurry."

Mercy fixed her eyes on him in a very peculiar way, and made no reply. You must know that something very curious had happened whilst Griffith was gone to Lancaster.

A travelling pedlar, passing by, was struck with the name on the sign-board. "Hallo!" said he, "why here's a namesake of mine; I'll have a glass of his ale any way."

So he came into the public room, and called for a glass; taking care to open his pack, and display his inviting wares. Harry Vint served him. "Here's your health," said the pedlar. "You must drink with me, you must."

"And welcome," said the old man.

"Well," said the pedlar, "I do travel five counties; but for all that, you are the first namesake I have found. I am Thomas Leicester, too, as sure as you are a living sinner."

The old man laughed, and said, "Then no namesake of mine are you; for they call me Harry Vint. Thomas Leicester, he that keeps this inn now, is my son-in-law: he is gone to Lancaster this morning."

The pedlar said that was a pity, he should have liked to see his namesake, and drink a glass with him.

"Come again to-morrow," said Harry Vint, ironically. "Dame," he cried, "come hither. Here's another Thomas Leicester for ye, wants to see our one."

Mrs. Vint turned her head, and inspected the pedlar from afar, as if he was some natural curiosity.

"Where do you come from, young man?" said she.

"Well, I came from Kendal last; but I am Cumberland born."

"Why, that is where t'other comes from," suggested Paul Carrick, who was once more a frequenter of the house.

"Like enow," said Mrs. Vint.

With that she dropped the matter as one of no consequence, and retired. But she went straight to Mercy, in the parlour, and told her there was a man in the kitchen that called himself Thomas Leicester.

"Well, mother?" said Mercy, with high indifference, for she was trying new socks on King Baby.

"He comes from Cumberland."

"Well, to be sure, names do run in counties."

"That is true; but, seems to me, he favours your man: much of a height, and—— There, do just step into the kitchen a moment."

"La, mother," said Mercy, "I don't desire to see any more Thomas Leicesters than my own: 'tis the man, not the name. 'Isn't it, my lamb?"

Mrs. Vint went back to the kitchen discomfited; but, with quiet pertinacity, she brought Thomas Leicester into the parlour, pack and all.

"There, Mercy," said she, "lay out a penny with thy husband's namesake."

Mercy did not reply, for, at that moment, Thomas Leicester caught sight of Griffith's portrait, and gave a sudden start, and a most extraordinary look besides.

Both the women's eyes happened to be upon him, and they saw at once that he knew the original.

"You know my husband?" said Mercy Vint, after a while.

"Not I," said Leicester, looking askant at the picture.

"Don't tell no lies," said Mrs. Vint. "You do know him well." And she pointed her assertion by looking at the portrait.

"Oh, I know him, whose picture hangs there, of course," said Leicester.

"Well, and that is her husband."

"Oh, that is her husband, is it?" And he was unaffectedly puzzled.

Mercy turned pale. "Yes, he is my husband," said she, "and this is our

child. Can you tell me anything about him? for he came a stranger to these parts. Belike you are a kinsman of his?"

"So they say."

This reply puzzled both women.

"Any way," said the pedlar, "you see we are marked alike." And he showed a long black mole on his forehead.

Mercy was now as curious as she had been indifferent. "Tell me all about him," said she: "how comes it that he is a gentleman and thou a pedlar?"

"Well, because my mother was a gipsy, and his a gentlewoman."

"What brought him to these parts?"

"Trouble, they say."

"What trouble?"

"Nay, I know not." This after a slight but visible hesitation.

"But you have heard say."

"Well, I am always on the foot, and don't bide long enough in one place to learn all the gossip. But I do remember hearing he was gone to sea: and that was a lie, for he had settled here, and married you. I fackins, he might have done worse. He has got a bonny buxom wife, and a rare fine boy, to be sure."

And now the pedlar was on his guard, and determined he would not be the one to break up the household he saw before him, and afflict the dove-eyed wife and mother. He was a good-natured fellow, and averse to make mischief with his own hands. Besides, he took for granted Griffith loved his new wife better than the old one; and above all, the punishment of bigamy was severe, and was it for him to get the Squire indicted, and branded in the hand for a felon?

So the women could get nothing more out of him; he lied, evaded, shuffled, and feigned utter ignorance; pleading, adroitly enough, his vagrant life.

All this, however, aroused vague suspicions in Mrs. Vint's mind, and she went and whispered them to her favourite, Paul Carrick. "And, Paul," said she, "call for what you like, and score it to me; only treat this pedlar till he leaks out summut: to be sure he'll tell a man more than he will us."

Paul entered with zeal into this commission: treated the pedlar to a chop, and plied him well with the best ale.

All this failed to loose the pedlar's tongue at the time, but it muddled his judgment: on resuming his journey, he gave his entertainer a wink. Carrick rose and followed him out.

"You seem a decent lad," said the pedlar, "and a good-hearted one. Wilt do me a favour?"

Carrick said he would, if it lay in his power.

"Oh, it is easy enow," said the pedlar. "'Tis just to give young Thomas Leicester, into his own hand, this here trifle as soon as ever he comes home." And he handed Carrick a hard substance wrapped up in paper. Carrick promised.

"Ay, ay, lad," said the pedlar, "but see you play fair, and give it him unbeknown. Now don't you be so simple as show it to any of the women-folk. D'ye understand?"

"All right," said Carrick, knowingly. And so the boon companions for a day shook hands and parted.

And Carrick took the little parcel straight to Mrs. Vint, and told her every word the pedlar had said.

And Mrs. Vint took the little parcel straight to Mercy, and told her what Carrick said the pedlar had said.

And the pedlar went off flushed with beer and self-complacency; for he thought he had drawn the line precisely; had faithfully discharged his promise to his lady and benefactress, but not so as to make mischief in another household.

Such was the power of Ale—in the last century.

Mercy undid the paper and found the bullet, on which was engraved

"I LOVE KATE."

As she read these words a knife seemed to enter her heart; the pang was so keen.

But she soon took herself to task. "Thou naughty woman," said she. "What! jealous of the dead?"

She wrapped the bullet up; put it carefully away; had a good cry; and was herself again.

But all this set her watching Griffith, and reading his face. She had subtle, vague, misgivings; and forbade her mother to mention the pedlar's visit to Griffith yet awhile. Womanlike, she preferred to worm out the truth.

On the evening of his return from Lancaster, as he was smoking his pipe, she quietly tested him. She fixed her eyes on him, and said, "One was here to-day, that knows thee, and brought thee this." She then handed him the bullet, and watched his face.

Griffith undid the paper carelessly enough; but, at sight of the bullet, uttered a loud cry, and his eyes seemed ready to start out of his head.

He turned as pale as ashes, and stammered, piteously, "What? what? what d'ye mean? In Heaven's name, what is this? How? Who?"

Mercy was surprised, but also much concerned at his distress; and tried to sooth him. She also asked him, piteously, whether she had done wrong to give it him. "God knows," said she, "'tis no business of mine to go and remind thee of her thou hast loved better mayhap than thou lovest me. But to keep it from thee, and she in her grave, oh I had not the heart."

But Griffith's agitation increased instead of diminishing; and, even while she was trying to sooth him, he rushed wildly out of the room, and into the open air.

Mercy went, in perplexity and distress, and told her mother.

Mrs. Vint, not being blinded by affection, thought the whole thing had a very ugly look, and said as much. She gave it as her opinion that this Kate was alive and had sent the token herself, to make mischief between man and wife.

"That shall she never," said Mercy, stoutly; but now her suspicions were thoroughly excited, and her happiness disturbed.

The next day, Griffith found her in tears: he asked her what was the matter. She would not tell him.

"You have your secrets," said she: "and so now I have mine."

Griffith became very uneasy.

For now Mercy was often in tears, and Mrs. Vint looked daggers at him.

All this was mysterious, and unintelligible, and, to a guilty man, very alarming.

At last he implored Mercy to speak out. He wanted to know the worst.

Then Mercy did speak out. "You have deceived me," said she. "Kate is alive. This very morning, between sleeping and waking, you whispered her name; ay, false man, whispered it like a lover. You told me she was dead. But she is alive; and has sent you a reminder, and the bare sight of it hath turned your heart her way again. What shall I do? Why did you marry me, if you could not forget her? I did not want you to desert any woman for me. The desire of my heart was always for your happiness. But oh, Thomas, deceit and falsehood will not bring you happiness, no more than they will me. What shall I do? what shall I do?"

Her tears flowed freely, and Griffith sat down, and groaned with horror and remorse, beside her.

He had not the courage to tell her the horrible truth, that Kate was his wife, and she was not.

"Do not thou afflict thyself," he muttered. "Of course, with you putting that bullet in my hand so sudden, it set my fancy a wandering back to other days."

"Ah!" said Mercy, "if it be no worse than that, there's little harm. But why did thy namesake start so at sight of thy picture?"

"My namesake!" cried Griffith, all aghast.

"Ay, he that brought thee that love-token; Thomas Leicester. Nay, for very shame, feign not ignorance of him; why, he hath thy very mole on his temple, and knew thy picture in a moment. He is thy half-brother, is he not?"

"I am a ruined man," cried Griffith; and sank into a chair without power of motion.

"God help me, what is all this?" cried Mercy. "Oh, Thomas, Thomas, I could forgive thee ought but deceit: for both our sakes speak out, and tell me the worst; no harm shall come near thee while I live."

"How can I tell thee? I am an unfortunate man. The world will call me a villain; yet I am not a villain at heart. But who will believe me? I have broken the law. Thee I could trust, but not thy folk; they never loved me. Mercy, for pity's sake, when was that Thomas Leicester here?"

"Four days ago."

"Which way went he?"

"I hear he told Paul he was going to Cumberland."

"If he gets there before me, I shall rot in gaol."

"Now God forbid! Oh, Thomas, then mount and ride after him."

"I will, and this very moment."

He saddled Black Dick, and loaded his pistols for the journey; but, ere he went, a pale face looked out into the yard, and a finger beckoned. It was Mercy. She bade him follow her. She took him to her room, where their child was sleeping; and then she closed and even locked the door.

"No soul can hear us," said she; "now, look me in the face, and tell me God's truth. Who and what are you?"

Griffith shuddered at this exordium; he made no reply.

Mercy went to a box, and took out an old shirt of his; the one he wore when he first came to the "Packhorse." She brought it to him and showed him "G. G." embroidered on it with a woman's hair. (Ryder's.)

"Here are your initials," said she; "now leave useless falsehoods; be a man, and tell me your real name."

"My name is Griffith Gaunt."

Mercy, sick at heart, turned her head away; but she had the resolution to urge him on. "Go on," said she, in an agonized whisper: "if you believe in God, and a judgment to come, deceive me no more. The truth! I say: the truth!"

"So be it," said Griffith, desperately: "when I have told thee what a villain I am, I can die at thy feet, and then thou wilt forgive me."

"Who is Kate?" was all she replied.

"Kate is my wife."

"I thought her false; who could think any other; appearances were so strong against her: others thought so beside me. I raised my hand to kill her; but she never winced. I trampled on him I believed her paramour: I fled, and soon I lay a dying in this house for her sake. I told thee she was dead. Alas! I thought her dead to me. I went back to our house (it is her house) sore against the grain, to get money for thee and thine. Then she cleared herself, bright as the sun, and pure as snow. She was all in black for me; she had put by money, against I should come to my senses and need it. I told her I owed a debt in Lancashire, a debt of gratitude as well as money: and so I did. How have I repaid it? The poor soul forced five hundred pounds on me. I had much ado to keep her from bringing it hither with her own hands; oh, villain! villain! Then I thought to leave thee, and send thee word I was dead; and heap money on thee. Money! But how could I? thou wast my benefactress, my more than wife. All the riches of the world can make no return to thee. What, what shall I do? Shall I fly with thee and thy child across the seas? Shall I go back to her? No, the best thing I can do is to take this good pistol, and let the life out of my dishonourable carcass, and free two honest women from me by one resolute act."

In his despair he cocked the pistol; and, at a word from Mercy, this tale had ended.

But the poor woman, pale and trembling, tottered across the room, and took it out of his hand. "I would not harm thy body, nor thy soul," she gasped. "Let me draw my breath, and think."

She rocked herself to and fro in silence.

Griffith stood trembling like a criminal before his judge.

It was long ere she could speak, for anguish. Yet when she did speak, it was with a sort of deadly calm.

"Go tell the truth to *her*, as you have done to me: and, if she can forgive you, all the better for you. I can never forgive you, nor yet can harm you. My child, my child! Thy father is our ruin. Oh begone, man, or the sight of you will kill us both."

Then he fell at her knees; kissed, and wept over her cold hand; and, in his pity and despair, offered to cross the seas with her and her child, and so repair the wrong he had done her.

"Tempt me not," she sobbed. "Go, leave me! none here shall ever know thy crime, but she whose heart thou hast broken, and ruined her good name."

He took her in his arms, in spite of her resistance, and kissed her passionately; but, for the first time, she shuddered at his embrace; and that gave him the power to leave her.

He rushed from her, all but distracted, and rode away to Cumberland; but not to tell the truth to Kate, if he could possibly help it.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AT this particular time, no man's presence was more desired in that county than Griffith Gaunt's.

And this I need not now be telling the reader, if I had related this story on the plan of a miscellaneous chronicle. But the affairs of the heart are so absorbing, that, even in a narrative, they thrust aside important circumstances of a less moving kind.

I must therefore go back a step, before I advance further. You must know that forty years before our Griffith Gaunt saw the light, another Griffith Gaunt was born in Cumberland: a younger son, and the family estate entailed; but a shrew lad, who chose rather to hunt fortune elsewhere, than to live in miserable dependence on his elder brother. His godfather, a city merchant, encouraged him, and he left Cumberland. He went into commerce, and in twenty years became a wealthy man, so wealthy that he lived to look down on his brother's estate, which he had once thought opulence. His life was all prosperity, with a single exception; but that a bitter one. He laid out some of his funds in a fashionable and beautiful wife. He loved her before marriage: and, as she was always cold to him, he loved her more and more.

In the second year of their marriage she ran away from him; and no beggar in the streets of London was so miserable as the wealthy merchant.

It blighted the man, and left him a sore heart all his days. He never married again; and railed on all womankind for this one. He led a solitary life in London till he was sixty-nine; and then, all of a sudden, Nature, or accident, or both, changed his whole habits. Word came to him that the family estate, already deeply mortgaged, was for sale, and a farmer who had rented a principal farm on it, and held a heavy mortgage, had made the highest offer.

Old Griffith sent down Mr. Atkins, his solicitor, post haste, and snapped the estate out of that purchaser's hands.

When the lands and house had been duly conveyed to him, he came down, and his heart seemed to bud again, in the scenes of his childhood.

Finding the house small, and built in a valley instead of on rising ground, he got an army of bricklayers, and began to build a mansion with a rapidity unheard of in those parts; and he looked about for some one to inherit it.

The name of Gaunt had dwindled down to three, since he left Cumberland; but a rich man never lacks relations. Featherstonhaughs, and Underhills, and even Smiths, poured in, with parish registers in their laps, and proved themselves Gauntesses; and flattered and carneyed the new head of the family.

Then the perverse old gentleman felt inclined to look elsewhere. He knew he had a namesake at the other side of the county, but this namesake did not come near him.

This independent Gaunt excited his curiosity and interest. He made inquiries, and heard that young Griffith had just quarrelled with his wife, and gone away in despair.

Griffith senior took for granted that the fault lay with Mrs. Gaunt, and wasted some good sympathy on Griffith junior.

On further inquiry he learned that the truant was dependent on his wife. Then, argued the moneyed man, he would not run away from her, but that his wound was deep.

The consequence of all this was, that he made a will very favourable to his absent and injured (?) namesake. He left numerous bequests; but made Griffith his residuary legatee; and having settled this matter, urged on, and superintended his workmen.

Alas! just as the roof was going on, a narrower house claimed him, and he made good the saying of the wise bard—

———*Tu secunda marmora
Locas sub ipsum funus et sepulchri
Immemor struis domos.*

The heir of his own choosing could not be found to attend his funeral; and Mr. Atkins, his solicitor, a very worthy man, was really hurt at this. With the quiet bitterness of a displeased attorney, he merely sent Mrs. Gaunt word her husband inherited something under the will, and she would do well to produce him, or else furnish him (Atkins) with proof of his decease.

Mrs. Gaunt was offended by this cavalier note, and replied very like a woman, and very unlike Business.

"I do not know where he is," said she, "nor whether he is alive or dead. Nor do I feel disposed to raise the hue and cry after him. But, favour me with your address, and I shall let you know should I hear anything about him."

Mr. Atkins was half annoyed, half amused, at this piece of indifference. It never occurred to him that it might be all put on.

He wrote back to say that the estate was large, and, owing to the terms of the will, could not be administered without Mr. Griffith Gaunt; and, in the interest of the said Griffith Gaunt, and also of the other legatees, he really must advertise for him.

La Gaunt replied that he was very welcome to advertise for whomsoever he pleased.

Mr. Atkins was a very worthy man; but human. To tell the truth, he was himself one of the other legatees. He inherited (and, to be just, had well deserved,) four thousand guineas, under the will, and could not legally touch it without Griffith Gaunt. This little circumstance spurred his professional zeal.

Mr. Atkins advertised for Griffith Gaunt, in the London and Cumberland papers, and in the usual enticing form. He was to apply to Mr. Atkins, Solicitor, of Grays Inn, and he would hear of something greatly to his advantage.

These advertisements had not been out a fortnight, when Griffith Gaunt came home, as I have related.

But Mr. Atkins had punished Mrs. Gaunt for her insouciance, by not informing her of the extent of her good fortune; so she merely told Griffith, casually, that old Griffith Gaunt had left him some money, and the solicitor, Mr. Atkins, could not get on without him. Even this information she did not vouchsafe until she had given him her 500*l.*, for she grudged Atkins the pleasure of supplying her husband with money.

However, as soon as Griffith left her, she wrote to Mr. Atkins to say that her husband had come home in perfect health, thank God; had only stayed two days, but was to return in a week.

When ten days had elapsed, Atkins wrote to inquire.

She replied he had not yet returned: and this went on till Mr. Atkins showed considerable impatience.

As for Mrs. Gaunt, she made light of the matter to Mr. Atkins; but, in truth, this new mystery irritated her and pained her deeply.

In one respect she was more unhappy than she had been before he came back at all. Then she was alone; her door was closed to commentators. But now, on the strength of so happy a reconciliation, she had re-entered the world, and received visits from Sir George Neville, and others; and, above all had announced that Griffith would be back for good in a few days. So now his continued absence exposed her to sly questions from her own sex, to the interchange of glances between female visitors, as well as to the internal torture of doubt and suspense.

But what distracted her most, was the view Mrs. Ryder took of the matter.

That experienced lady had begun to suspect some other woman was at the bottom of Griffith's conduct: and her own love for Griffith was now soured; repeated disappointments and affronts, *spretæque injuria formæ*, had not quite extinguished it, but had mixed so much spite with it, that she was equally ready to kiss or to stab him.

So she took every opportunity to instil into her mistress, whose confidence she had won at last, that Griffith was false to her.

"That is the way with these men that are so ready to suspect others. Take my word for it, Dame, he has carried your money to his leman. 'Tis still the honest woman that must bleed for some nasty trollop or other."

She enforced this theory by examples drawn from her own observations in families, and gave the very names; and drove Mrs. Gaunt almost mad with fear, anger, jealousy, and cruel suspense. She could not sleep, she could not eat; she was in a constant fever.

Yet before the world she battled it out bravely, and indeed none but Ryder knew the anguish of her spirit, and her passionate wrath.

At last there came a most eventful day.

Mrs. Gaunt had summoned all her pride and fortitude, and invited certain ladies and gentlemen to dine and sup.

She was one of the true Spartan breed, and played the hostess as well as if her heart had been at ease. It was an age in which the host struggled fiercely to entertain the guests; and Mrs. Gaunt was taxing all her powers of pleasing in the dining-room, when an unexpected guest strolled into the kitchen. The pedlar, Thomas Leicester.

Jane welcomed him cordially, and he was soon seated at a table eating his share of the feast.

Presently Mrs. Ryder came down, dressed in her best, and looking handsomer than ever.

At sight of her, Tom Leicester's affection revived; and he soon took occasion to whisper an inquiry whether she was still single.

"Ay," said she, "and like to be."

"Waiting for the master still? Mayhap I could cure you of that complaint. But least said is soonest mended."

This mysterious hint showed Ryder he had a secret burning his bosom. The sly hussy said nothing just then, but plied him with ale and flattery; and, when he whispered a request for a private meeting out of doors, she cast her eyes down, and assented.

And in that meeting she carried herself so adroitly, that he renewed his offer of marriage, and told her not to waste her fancy on a man who cared neither for her nor any other she in Cumberland.

"Prove that to me," said Ryder, cunningly, "and may be I'll take you at your word."

The bribe was not to be resisted. Tom revealed to her, under a solemn promise of secrecy, that the Squire had got a wife and child in Lancashire; and had a farm and an inn, which latter he kept under the name of—Thomas Leicester.

In short, he told her, in his way, all the particulars I have told in mine.

She led him on with a voice of very velvet. He did not see how her cheek paled and her eyes flashed jealous fury.

When she had sucked him dry, she suddenly turned on him, with a cold voice, and said, "I can't stay any longer with you just now. She will want me."

"You will meet me here again, lass?" said Tom, ruefully.

"Yes, for a minute, after supper."

She then left him, and went to Mrs. Gaunt's room, and sat crouching before the fire, "all hate and bitterness.

What? he had left the wife he loved, and yet had not turned to her!

She sat there, waiting for Mrs. Gaunt, and nursing her vindictive fury, two mortal hours.

At last, just before supper, Mrs. Gaunt came up to her room, to cool her fevered hands and brow, and found this creature crouched by her fire, all in a heap, with pale cheek, and black eyes that glittered like basilisk's.

"What is the matter, child?" said Mrs. Gaunt. "Good Heavens! what hath happened?"

"Dame!" said Ryder, sternly, "I have got news of him."

"News of *him*?" faltered Mrs. Gaunt. "Bad news?"

"I don't know whether to tell you or not," said Ryder, sulkily, but with a touch of human feeling.

"What cannot I bear? What have I not borne? Tell me the truth."

The words were stout, but she trembled all over in uttering them.

"Well, it is as I said; only worse. Dame, he has got a wife and child in another county; and no doubt been deceiving her, as he has *us*."

"A wife!" gasped Mrs. Gaunt, and one white hand clutched her bosom, and the other the mantelpiece.

"Ay, Thomas Leicester, that is in the kitchen now, saw her, and saw his picture hanging aside hers on the wall. And he goes by the name of Thomas Leicester: that was what made Tom go into the inn, seeing his own name on the signboard. Nay, Dame, never give way like that, lean on me; so. He is a villain, a false, jealous, double-faced villain."

Mrs. Gaunt's head fell back on Ryder's shoulder, and she said no word; but only moaned and moaned, and her white teeth clicked convulsively together.

Ryder wept over her sad state: the tears were half impulse, half crocodile.

She applied hartshorn to the sufferer's nostrils, and tried to rouse her mind by exciting her anger. But all was in vain. There hung the betrayed wife, pale, crushed, and quivering under the cruel blow.

Ryder asked her if she should go down and excuse her to her guests.

She nodded a feeble assent.

Ryder then laid her down on the bed with her head low, and was just about to leave her on that errand, when hurried steps were heard outside the door; and one of the female servants knocked; and, not waiting to be invited, put her head in, and cried "Oh, Dame, the Master is come home. He is in the kitchen."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MRS. RYDER made an agitated motion with her hand, and gave the girl such a look withal, that she retired precipitately.

But Mrs. Gaunt had caught the words, and they literally transformed her. She sprang off the bed, and stood erect, and looked a Saxon Pythoness: golden hair streaming down her back, and grey eyes gleaming with fury.

She caught up a little ivory-handled knife, and held it above her head.

"I'll drive this into his heart before them all," she cried, "and tell them the reason *afterwards*."

Ryder looked at her for a moment in utter terror. She saw a woman with grander passions than herself: a woman that looked quite capable of executing her sanguinary threat. Ryder made no more ado, but slipped out directly to prevent a meeting that might be attended with terrible consequences.

She found her master in the kitchen, splashed with mud, drinking a horn of ale after his ride, and looking rather troubled and anxious; and, by the keen eye of her sex, she saw that the female servants were also in considerable anxiety. The fact is, they had just extemporized a lie.

Tom Leicester being near the kitchen window, had seen Griffith ride into the court yard.

At sight of that well known figure, he drew back, and his heart quaked at his own imprudence, in confiding Griffith's secret to Caroline Ryder.

"Lasses," said he, hastily, "do me a kindness for old acquaintance. Here's the Squire. For heaven's sake don't let him know I am in the house, or there will be bloodshed between us; he is a hasty man, and I'm another. I'll tell ye more by and by."

The next moment Griffith's tread was heard approaching the very door, and Leicester darted into the housekeeper's room, and hid in a cupboard there.

Griffith opened the kitchen door, and stood upon the threshold.

The women curtsied to him, and were loud in welcome.

He returned their civilities briefly; and then his first word was—"Hath Thomas Leicester been here?"

You know how servants stick together against their master! The girls looked him in the face, like candid doves, and told him Leicester had not been that way for six months or more.

"Why, I have tracked him to within two miles," said Griffith, doubtfully.

"Then he is sure to come here," said Jane, adroitly. "He wouldn't ever think to go by us."

"The moment he enters the house, you let me know. He is a mischief-making loon."

He then asked for a horn of ale; and, as he finished it, Ryder came in, and he turned to her, and asked her after her mistress.

"She was well, just now," said Ryder; "but she has been took with a spasm: and it would be well, sir, if you could dress, and entertain the company in her place awhile. For I must tell you, your being so long away hath set their tongues going, and almost broken my lady's heart."

Griffith sighed, and said he could not help it, and now he was here, he would do all in his power to please her. "I'll go to her at once," said he.

"No, sir!" said Ryder, firmly. "Come with me. I want to speak to you."

She took him to his bachelor's room, and stayed a few minutes to talk to him.

"Master," said she, solemnly; "things are very serious here. Why did you stay so long away? Our Dame says some woman is at the bottom of it, and she'll put a knife into you if you come a nigh her."

This threat did not appal Griffith, as Ryder expected. Indeed, he seemed rather flattered.

"Poor Kate!" said he, "she is just the woman to do it. But I am afraid she does not love me enough for that. But indeed how should she?"

"Well, sir," replied Ryder, "oblige me by keeping clear of her for a little while. I have got orders to make your bed here. Now, dress, like a good soul, and then go down and show respect to the company that is in your house; for they know you are here."

"Why, that is the least I can do," said Griffith. "Put you out what I am to wear, and then run and say I'll be with them anon."

Griffith walked into the dining-room, and, somewhat to his surprise, after what Ryder had said, found Mrs. Gaunt seated at the head of her own table, and presiding like a radiant queen over a brilliant assembly.

He walked in, and made a low bow to his guests first: then he approached, to greet his wife more freely; but she drew back decidedly, and made him a curtsy, the dignity and distance of which struck the whole company.

Sir George Neville, who was at the bottom of the table, proposed, with his usual courtesy, to resign his place to Griffith. But Mrs. Gaunt forbade the arrangement.

"No, Sir George," said she, "this is but an occasional visitor; you are my constant friend."

If this had been said pleasantly, well and good; but the guests looked in vain into their hostess's face for the smile that ought to have accompanied so strange a speech and disarmed it.

"Rarities are the more welcome," said a lady, coming to the rescue; and edged aside to make room for him.

"Madam," said Griffith, "I am in your debt for that explanation; but I hope you will be no rarity here, for all that."

Supper proceeded; but the mirth languished. Somehow or other, the chill fact that there was a grave quarrel between two at the table, and those two man and wife, insinuated itself into the spirits of the guests.

There began to be lulls: fatal lulls. And in one of these, some unlucky voice was heard to murmur, "Such a meeting of man and wife, I never saw."

The hearers felt miserable at this personality, that fell upon the ear of silence like a thunderbolt.

Griffith was ill-advised enough to notice the remark, though clearly not intended for his ears. For one thing, his jealousy had actually revived at the cool preference Kate had shown his old rival, Neville.

"Oh!" said he, bitterly, "a man is not always his wife's favourite."

"He does not always deserve to be," said Mrs. Gaunt, sternly.

When matters had gone that length, one idea seemed to occur pretty simultaneously to all the well-bred guests: and that idea was, *Sauve qui peut*.

Mrs. Gaunt took leave of them, one by one, and husband and wife were left alone.

Mrs. Gaunt by this time was alarmed at the violence of her own passions, and wished to avoid Griffith for that night at all events. So she cast one terribly stern look upon him, and was about to retire in grim silence. But

he, indignant at the public affront she had put on him, and not aware of the true cause, unfortunately detained her. He said, sulkily, "What sort of a reception was that you gave me?"

This was too much. She turned on him furiously. "Too good for thee, thou heartless creature! Thomas Leicester is here, and I know thee for a villain."

"You know nothing," cried Griffith. "Would you believe that mischief-making knave? What has he told you?"

"Go back to *her*!" cried Mrs. Gaunt furiously. "Me you can deceive and pillage no more. So, this was your jealousy! False and forsworn yourself, you dared to suspect and insult me. Ah! and you think I am the woman to endure this? I'll have your life for it! I'll have your life."

Griffith endeavoured to soften her, protested that, notwithstanding appearances, he had never loved but her.

"I'll soon be rid of you, and your love," said the raging woman. "The constables shall come for you to-morrow. You have seen how I can love, you shall know how I can hate."

She then, in her fury, poured out a torrent of reproaches and threats that made his blood run cold. He could not answer her: he *had* suspected her wrongfully, and been false to her himself. He *had* abused her generosity, and taken her money for Mercy Vint.

After one or two vain efforts to check the torrent, he sank into a chair, and hid his face in his hands.

But this did not disarm her, at the time. Her raging voice and raging words were heard by the very servants, long after he had ceased to defend himself.

At last she came out, pale with fury, and finding Ryder near the door, shrieked out, "Take that reptile to his den, if he is mean enough to lie in this house:" then, lowering her voice, "and bring Thomas Leicester to me."

Ryder went to Leicester, and told him. But he objected to come. "You have betrayed me," said he. "Curse my weak heart, and my loose tongue. I have done the poor Squire an ill turn. I can never look him in the face again. But 'tis all thy fault, double-face. I hate the sight of thee."

At this Ryder shed some crocodile tears; and very soon, by her blandishments, obtained forgiveness.

And Leicester, since the mischief was done, was persuaded to see the Dame, who was his recent benefactor, you know. He bargained, however, that the Squire should be got to bed first: for he had a great dread of meeting him. "He'll break every bone in my skin," said Tom; "or else I shall do *him* a mischief in my defence."

Ryder herself saw the wisdom of this: she bade him stay quiet, and she went to look after Griffith.

She found him in the drawing-room, with his head on the table, in deep dejection.

She assumed authority, and said he must go to bed.

He rose humbly, and followed her like a submissive dog.

She took him to his room. There was no fire.

"That is where you are to sleep," said she, spitefully.

"It is better than I deserve," said he humbly.

The absurd rule about not hitting a man when he is down, has never obtained a place in the great female soul; so Ryder lashed him without mercy.

"Well, sir," said she, "methinks you have gained little by breaking faith with me. Y' had better have set up your inn with me, than gone and sinned against the law."

"Much better: would to Heaven I had!"

"What d'ye mean to do now? You know the saying. Between two stools——"

"Child," said Griffith, faintly, "methinks I shall trouble neither long. I am not so ill a man as I seem; but who will believe that? I shall not live long. And I shall leave an ill name behind me. *She* told me so just now. And, oh, her eye was so cruel; I saw my death in it."

"Come, come," said Ryder, relenting a little, "you mustn't believe every word an angry woman says. There, take my advice; go to bed; and in the morning don't speak to her; keep out of her way a day or two."

And with this piece of friendly advice she left him; and waited about till she thought he was in bed and asleep.

Then she brought Thomas Leicester up to her mistress.

But Griffith was not in bed; and he heard Leicester's heavy tread cross the landing. He waited and waited behind his door for more than half an hour, and then he heard the same heavy tread go away again.

By this time nearly all the inmates of the house were asleep.

About twenty-five minutes after Leicester left Mrs. Gaunt, Caroline Ryder stole quietly upstairs from the kitchen; and sat down to think it all over.

She then proceeded to undress; but had only taken off her gown, when she started and listened; for a cry of distress reached her from outside the house.

She darted to the window and threw it open.

Then she heard a cry more distinct. "Help! help!"

It was a clear starlight night, but no moon.

The mere shone before her, and the cries were on the bank.

Now came something more alarming still. A flash: a pistol shot: and an agonized voice cried loudly, "Murder! Help! Murder!"

That voice she knew directly. It was Griffith Gaunt's.

CHAPTER XXXV.

RYDER ran screaming, and alarmed the other servants.

All the windows that looked on the mere were flung open.

But no more sounds were heard. A terrible silence brooded now over those clear waters.

The female servants huddled together, and quaked; for who could doubt that a bloody deed had been done?

It was some time before they mustered the presence of mind to go and tell Mrs. Gaunt. At last they opened her door. She was not in her room.

Ryder ran to Griffith's. It was locked.

She called to him. He made no reply.

They burst the door open. He was not there: and the window was open. While their tongues were all going, in consternation, Mrs. Gaunt was suddenly among them, very pale.

They turned, and looked at her aghast.

"What means all this?" said she. "Did not I hear cries outside?"

"Ay," said Ryder: "Murder! and a pistol fired. Oh, my poor master!"

Mrs. Gaunt was white as death; but self-possessed. "Light torches this moment, and search the place," said she.

There was only one man in the house; and he declined to go out alone. So Ryder and Mrs. Gaunt went with him, all three bearing lighted links.

They searched the place where Ryder had heard the cries. They went up and down the whole bank of the mere, and cast their torches' red light over the placid waters themselves. But there was nothing to be seen, alive or dead; no trace either of calamity or crime.

They roused the neighbours, and came back to the house with their clothes all draggled and dirty.

Mrs. Gaunt took Ryder apart, and asked her if she could guess at what time of the night Griffith had made his escape.

"He is a villain," said she, "yet I would not have him come to harm, God knows. There are thieves abroad. But I hope he ran away as soon as your back was turned, and so fell not in with them."

"Humph!" said Ryder. Then, looking Mrs. Gaunt in the face, she said, quietly, "Where were you when you heard the cries?"

"I was on the other side of the house."

"What, out o' doors, at that time of night!"

"Ay; I was in the grove. Praying."

"Did you hear any voice you knew?"

"No: all was too indistinct. I heard a pistol, but no words. Did you?"

"I heard no more than you, madam," said Ryder, trembling.

No one went to bed any more that night in Hernshaw Castle.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THIS mysterious circumstance made a great talk in the village, and in the kitchen of Hernshaw Castle; but not in the drawing-room: for Mrs. Gaunt instantly closed her door to visitors, and let it be known that it was her intention to retire to a convent; and, in the meantime, she desired not to be disturbed.

Ryder made one or two attempts to draw her out upon the subject, but was sternly checked.

Pale, gloomy, and silent, the mistress of Hernshaw Castle moved about the place, like the ghost of her former self. She never mentioned Griffith; forbade his name to be uttered in her hearing; and, strange to say, gave Ryder strict orders not to tell any one what she had heard from Thomas Leicester.

"This last insult is known but to you and me. If it ever gets abroad, you leave my service that very hour."

This injunction set Ryder thinking. However, she obeyed it to the letter. Her place was getting better and better; and she was a woman accustomed to keep secrets.

A pressing letter came from Mr. Atkins.

Mrs. Gaunt replied that her husband had come to Hernshaw, but had left again; and the period of his ultimate return was now more uncertain than ever.

On this Mr. Atkins came down to Hernshaw Castle. But Mrs. Gaunt would not see him. He retired very angry; and renewed his advertisements, but in a more explicit form. He now published that Griffith Gaunt, of Hernshaw and Bolton, was executor and residuary legatee to the late Griffith Gaunt, of Coggleswade: and requested him to apply directly to James Atkins, Solicitor, of Gray's Inn, London.

In due course this advertisement was read by the servants at Hernshaw; and shown, by Ryder, to Mrs. Gaunt.

She made no comment whatever; and contrived to render her pale face impenetrable.

Ryder became as silent and thoughtful as herself, and often sat bending her black judicial brows.

By-and-by dark mysterious words began to be thrown out in Hernshaw village.

"He will never come back at all."

"He will never come into that fortune."

"'Tis no use advertising for a man that is past reading."

These, and the like equivocal sayings, were followed by a vague buzz, which was traceable to no individual author, but seemed to rise on all sides, like a dark mist, and envelope that unhappy house.

And that dark mist of Rumour soon condensed itself into a palpable and terrible whisper, "Griffith Gaunt hath met with foul play."

No one of the servants told Mrs. Gaunt this horrid rumour.

But the women used to look at her, and after her, with strange eyes.

She noticed this, and felt, somehow, that her people were falling away from her. It added one drop to her bitter cup. She began to droop into a sort of calm despondent lethargy.

Then came fresh trouble to rouse her.

Two of the county magistrates called on her in their official capacity, and, with perfect politeness, but a very grave air, requested her to inform them of all the circumstances attending her husband's disappearance.

She replied, coldly and curtly, that she knew very little about it. Her husband had left in the middle of the night.

"He came to stay?"

"I believe so."

"Came on horseback?"

"Yes."

"Did he go away on horseback?"

"No: for the horse is now in my stable."

"Is it true there was a quarrel between you and him that evening?"

"Gentlemen," said Mrs. Gaunt, drawing herself back, haughtily, "did you come here to gratify your curiosity?"

"No, madam," said the elder of the two; "but to discharge a very serious and painful duty, in which I earnestly request you, and even advise you, to aid us. Was there a quarrel?"

"There was—a mortal quarrel."

The gentlemen exchanged glances, and the elder made a note.

"May we ask the subject of that quarrel?"

Mrs. Gaunt declined, positively, to enter into a matter so delicate.

A note was taken of this refusal.

"Are you aware, madam, that your husband's voice was heard calling for help, and that a pistol shot was fired?"

Mrs. Gaunt trembled visibly.

"I heard the pistol shot," said she; "but not the voice distinctly. Oh, I hope it was not his voice Ryder heard."

"Ryder, who is he?"

"Ryder is my lady's-maid: her bedroom is on that side the house."

"Can we see Mrs. Ryder?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Gaunt, and rose and rang the bell.

Mrs. Ryder answered the bell, in person, very promptly; for she was listening at the door.

Being questioned, she told the magistrates what she had heard down by "the mere;" and said she was sure it was her master's voice that cried "Help!" and "Murder!" And with this she began to cry.

Mrs. Gaunt trembled and turned pale.

The magistrates confined their questions to Ryder.

They elicited, however, very little more from her. She saw the drift of their questions, and had an impulse to defend her mistress there present. Behind her back it would have been otherwise.

That resolution once taken, two children might as well have tried to extract evidence from her as two justices of the peace.

And then Mrs. Gaunt's pale face and noble features touched them. The case was mysterious, but no more; and they departed little the wiser, and with some apologies for the trouble they had given her.

The next week down came Mr. Atkins, out of all patience, and determined to find Griffith Gaunt, or else obtain some proof of his decease.

He obtained two interviews with Ryder, and bribed her to tell him all she knew. He prosecuted other inquiries with more method than had hitherto been used, and elicited an important fact, viz., that Griffith Gaunt had been seen walking in a certain direction at one o'clock in the morning, followed at a short distance by a tall man with a knapsack, or the like, on his back.

The person who gave this tardy information was the wife of a certain farmer's man, who wired hares upon the sly. The man himself, being assured that, in a case so serious as this, no particular inquiries should be made how he came to be out so late, confirmed what his wife had let out, and added that both men had taken the way that would lead them to the bridge,

meaning the bridge over the mere. More than that he could not say, for he had met them, and was full half a mile from the mere before those men could have reached it.

Following up this clue, Mr. Atkins learned so many ugly things, that he went to the Bench on justicing day, and demanded a full and searching inquiry on the premises.

Sir George Neville, after in vain opposing this, rode off straight from the Bench to Hershaw, and in feeling terms conveyed the bad news to Mrs. Gaunt; and then, with the utmost delicacy, let her know that some suspicion rested upon herself, which she would do well to meet with the bold front of innocence.

"What suspicion, pray?" said Mrs. Gaunt, haughtily.

Sir George shrugged his shoulders, and replied, "That you have done Gaunt the honour—to put him out of the way."

Mrs. Gaunt took this very differently from what Sir George expected.

"What!" she cried, "are they so sure he is dead? murdered!"

And, with this, she went into a passion of grief and remorse.

Even Sir George was puzzled, as well as affected, by her convulsive agitation.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THOUGH it was known the proposed inquiry might result in the committal of Mrs. Gaunt on a charge of murder, yet the respect in which she had hitherto been held, and the influence of Sir George Neville, who, having been her lover, stoutly maintained her innocence, prevailed so far, that even this inquiry was private, and at her own house. Only she was present in the character of a suspected person, and the witnesses were examined before her.

First, the poacher gave his evidence.

Then, Jane the cook proved, that a pedlar called Thomas Leicester had been in the kitchen, and secreted about the premises till a late hour; and this Thomas Leicester corresponded exactly to the description given by the poacher.

This threw suspicion on Thomas Leicester, but did not connect Mrs. Gaunt with the deed in any way.

But Ryder's evidence filled this gap. She revealed three serious facts:—

First, that, by her mistress's orders, she had introduced this very Leicester into her mistress's room about midnight, where he had remained nearly half an hour, and had then left the house.

Secondly, that Mrs. Gaunt herself had been out of doors after midnight.

And, thirdly, that she had listened at the door, and heard her threaten Griffith Gaunt's life.

This is a mere précis of the evidence, and altogether it looked so suspicious, that the magistrates, after telling Mrs. Gaunt she could ask the witnesses any question she chose, a suggestion she treated with marked contempt, put their heads together a moment, and whispered. Then the eldest of them, Mr. Underhill, who lived at a considerable distance, told her gravely he must commit her to take her trial at the next assizes.

"Do what you conceive to be your duty, gentlemen," said Mrs. Gaunt, with marvellous dignity. "If I do not assert my innocence, it is because I disdain the accusation too much."

"I shall take no part in the committal of this innocent lady," said Sir George Neville: and was about to leave the room.

But Mrs. Gaunt begged him to stay. "To be guilty, is one thing," said she, "to be accused, is another: I shall go to prison as easy as to my dinner, and to the gallows as to my bed."

The presiding magistrate was staggered a moment by these words; and it was not without considerable hesitation he took the warrant, and prepared to fill it up.

Then Mr. Houseman, who had watched the proceedings very keenly, put in his word. "I am here for the accused person, sir, and, with your good leave, object to her committal—on grounds of law."

"What may they be, Mr. Houseman?" said the magistrate, civilly; and laid his pen down to hear them.

"Briefly, sir, these. Where a murder is proven, you can commit a subject of this realm upon suspicion. But you cannot suspect the murder as well as the culprit, and so commit. The murder must be proved to the senses. Now in this case the death of Mr. Gaunt by violence is not proved. Indeed his very death rests but upon suspicion. I admit that the law of England in this respect has once or twice been tampered with, and persons have even been executed where no corpus delicti was found; but what was the consequence? In each case the murdered man turned out to be alive, and justice was the only murderer. After Harrison's case, and *'s, no Cumberland jury will ever commit for murder, unless the corpus delicti has been found, and with signs of violence upon it. Come, come, Mr. Atkins, you are too good a lawyer, and too humane a man, to send my client to prison on the suspicion of a suspicion, which you know the very breath of the judge will blow away, even if the grand jury let it go into court. I offer bail, ten thousand pounds in two sureties; Sir George Neville here present, and myself."

The magistrate looked to Mr. Atkins.

"I am not employed by the Crown," said that gentleman, "but acting on mere civil grounds, and have no right nor wish to be severe. Bail by all means; but is the lady so sure of her innocence as to lend me her assistance to find the corpus delicti?"

The question was so shrewdly put, that any hesitation would have ruined Mrs. Gaunt.

Houseman, therefore, replied eagerly and promptly; "I answer for her, she will."

Mrs. Gaunt bowed her head in assent.

"Then," said Atkins, "I ask leave to drag, and, if need be, to drain, that piece of water there, called 'the mere.'"

"Drag it, or drain it, which you will," said Houseman.

Said Atkins, very impressively, "And, mark my words, at the bottom of that very sheet of water there, I shall find the remains of the late Griffith Gaunt."

At these solemn words, coming, as they did, not from a loose unprofessional speaker, but from a lawyer, a man who measured all his words, a very keen observer might have seen a sort of tremor run all through Mr. Houseman's frame. The more admirable was the perfect coolness and seeming indifference with which he replied.

"Find him, and I'll admit suicide; find him, with signs of violence, and I'll admit homicide; by some person or persons unknown."

All further remarks were interrupted by bustle and confusion.

Mrs. Gaunt had fainted dead away.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OF course pity was the first feeling; but, by the time Mrs. Gaunt revived, her fainting, so soon after Mr. Atkins's proposal, had produced a sinister effect on the minds of all present; and every face showed it, except the wary Houseman's.

On her retiring, it broke out first in murmurs, then in plain words.

As for Mr. Atkins, he now showed the moderation of an able man who feels he has a strong cause.

He merely said, "I think there should be constables about, in case of an escape being attempted; but I agree with Mr. Houseman that your worships will be quite justified in taking bail, provided the corpus delicti should not be found. Gentlemen, you were most of you neighbours and friends of the deceased, and are, I am sure, lovers of justice; I do entreat you to aid me in searching that piece of water, by the side of which the deceased gentleman was heard to cry for help; and, much I fear, he cried in vain."

The persons thus appealed to entered into the matter with all the ardour of just men, whose curiosity as well as justice is inflamed.

A set of old rusty drags was found on the premises: and men went punting up and down the mere, and dragged it.

Rude hooks were made by the village blacksmith, and fitted to cart-ropes; another boat was brought to Hernshaw in a waggon, and all that afternoon the bottom of the mere was raked; and some curious things fished up. But no dead man.

The next day a score of amateur dragmen were out: some throwing their drags from the bridge; some circulating in boats, and even in large tubs.

And, meantime, Mr. Atkins and his crew went steadily up and down, dragging every foot of those placid waters.

They worked till dinner time, and brought up a good copper pot with two handles, a horse's head, and several decayed trunks of trees, which had become saturated, and sunk to the bottom.

At about three in the afternoon, two boys who, for want of a boat, were dragging from the bridge, found something heavy but elastic at the end of their drag: they pulled up eagerly, and a thing like a huge turnip, half gnawed, came up, with a great bob, and blasted their sight.

They let go, drags and all, and stood shrieking, and shrieking.

Those who were nearest them called out, and asked what was the matter ; but the boys did not reply, and their faces showed so white, that a woman, who saw them, hailed Mr. Atkins, and said she was sure those boys had seen something out of the common.

Mr. Atkins came up, and found the boys blubbering. He encouraged them, and they told him a fearful thing had come up ; it was like a man's head and shoulders all scooped out and gnawed by the fishes ; and had torn the drags out of their hands.

Mr. Atkins made them tell him the exact place ; and he was soon upon it with his boat.

The water here was very deep, and though the boys kept pointing to the very spot, the drags found nothing for some time.

But at last they showed, by their resistance, that they had clawed hold of something.

"Draw slowly," said Mr. Atkins, "and, *if it is*, be men, and hold fast."

The men drew slowly, slowly, and presently there rose to the surface a Thing to strike terror and loathing into the stoutest heart.

The mutilated remains of a human face and body.

The greedy pike had cleared, not the features only, but the entire flesh off the face ; but had left the hair, and the tight skin of the forehead, though their teeth had raked this last. The remnants they had left made what they had mutilated doubly horrible ; since now it was not a skull ; not a skeleton ; but a face and a man gnawed down to the bones and hair and feet. These last were in stout shoes that resisted even those voracious teeth ; and a leathern stock had offered some little protection to the throat.

The men groaned, and hid their faces with one hand, and pulled softly to the shore with the other ; and then, with half-averted faces, they drew the ghastly remains and fluttering rags gently and reverently to land.

Mr. Atkins yielded to Nature, and was violently sick at the sight he had searched for so eagerly.

As soon as he recovered his powers, he bade the constables guard the body (it was a body, in law), and see that no one laid so much as a finger on it until some magistrate had taken a deposition. He also sent a messenger to Mr. Houseman, telling him the *corpus delicti* was found. He did this, partly to show that gentleman he was right in his judgment, and partly out of common humanity ; since, after this discovery, Mr. Houseman's client was sure to be tried for her life.

A magistrate soon came, and viewed the remains, and took careful notes of the state in which they were found.

Houseman came, and was much affected both by the sight of his dead friend, so mutilated, and by the probable consequences to Mrs. Gaunt. However, as lawyers fight very hard, he recovered himself enough to remark that there were no marks of violence before death, and insisted on this being inserted in the magistrate's notes.

An inquest was ordered next day, and meantime Mrs. Gaunt was told she could not quit the upper apartments of her own house. Two constables were placed on the ground floor night and day.

Next day the remains were removed to the little inn where Griffith had spent so many jovial hours; laid on a table, and covered with a white sheet.

The coroner's jury sat in the same room, and the evidence I have already noticed was gone into, and the finding of the body deposed to. The jury, without hesitation, returned a verdict of wilful murder.

Mrs. Gaunt was then brought in. She came, white as a ghost, leaning upon Houseman's shoulder.

Upon her entering, a juryman, by a humane impulse, drew the sheet over the remains again.

The coroner, according to the custom of the day, put a question to Mrs. Gaunt, with the view of eliciting her guilt. If I remember right, he asked her how she came to be out of doors so late on the night of the murder. Mrs. Gaunt, however, was in no condition to answer queries. I doubt if she even heard this one. Her lovely eyes, dilated with horror, were fixed on that terrible sheet, with a stony glance. "Show me," she gasped, "and let me die too."

The jurymen looked, with doubtful faces, at the coroner. He bowed a grave assent.

The nearest juryman withdrew the sheet.

Now, the belief was not yet extinct that the dead body shows some signs of its murderer's approach.

So every eye glared on her and it by turns, as she, with dilated, horror-stricken orbs, looked on that awful Thing.



THE MORTAL IMMORTAL.

THE living Spring has come once more,
And woos old Earth with smiles and tears,
Till he grows young again, and wears
The leafy crown he wore of yore.

She lifts her eyes, she spreads her hands,
She bids the waiting buds to spring,
She bids the birds to nest and sing,
Gives love and life to all the lands.

The bronze boughs with a greening haze
Of myriad infant leaves she veils,
Spreads blue-bell carpets o'er the dales,
With wind-flowers strews the woodland ways.

I sit beneath the hawthorn trees
Where you and I, a year ago,
Sat sprinkled with the scented snow
Shed by the passing of the breeze.

I see the daisies spring again,
I hear the cushat in the wood,
The twittering of the swallow's brood,
The soft hush of the silver rain ;

The swelling of glad marriage bells,
The lowing of field-wending herds,
The morning chant of happy birds,
About, among the happy dells.

And all things to the outward ear,
And all things to the outward eye,
Sound, as I idly pass them by,
And look as they were wont last year.

But ah ! the scented silver snow
That falls this year upon my head,
Knows nothing of the snow, now dead,
Sprinkling two heads a year ago.

The daisies are not those we knew,
Upspringing 'mid the vernal grass,
O'er which our footsteps used to pass,
Leaving a track amid the dew.

Those swallows 'neath the shadowing eaves
Were breathless, lifeless, and the doves
Had other nests and other loves
Hid in the shade of other leaves.

A thousand times the years restore
Earth's jocund youth :—not so with man ;
His days are but a little span,
His Spring departed comes no more.

So be it.—'Twere a weary thought
That, having warred with pain and strife,
Against the ills of human life
The battle must afresh be fought.

Rest is so sweet ! the rest that ends
Vext tossings on tormented seas,
The unwilling sport of every breeze
That every passing cloudlet sends.

So be it : for we hold this truth,
That Time is monarch of the Earth ;
Once dead, the World has no new birth,
Man only owns Eternal Youth.

MARGUERITE A. POWER.

AN OLD FRENCH CITY.



HÔTEL LALLEMAND.

BY a special interposition of providence, and the prayers (*sous entendu*) of its patron saint, St. Etienne, Bourges is on the road to nowhere. It is approached, in this year of grace eighteen hundred and sixty-six, by a little branch railway between the *Ligne du Centre* and the *Ligne du Bourbonnais*. It is also built upon a small hill, overlooking the wide plains of Berri; in consequence it would be both expensive and useless to drive boulevarts through its antique streets. It therefore remains much what it was twenty years ago, when we drove into the town with post-horses, being bound from Geneva to Paris. Oh, those days of trotting horses and jingling bells, across the bare wide fields of France, along the interminable pavés lined

with low fruit-trees, past the dirty villages, each with its small hostellerie, and its little church, and so at night clattering into the gates of the fortified town. Those days are gone for ever. I am glad I have known them: "I, too, have been in Arcadia," and have driven post like Sterne, like Arthur Young, like Louis XVI. flying to Varennes, like Marie Antoinette looking in agonized suspicion from her chariot window. You, my little heir of the nineteenth century! you, oh child of the train and the telegraph! nothing will you ever know of ancient France—of *l'ancienne régime*. You will not even stop at towns such as these; for you will have no youthful memories calling on you to "*halte-là!*" To you, Bourges, Chartres, Rheims, will simply mean "*Buffet, dix minutes d'arrêt.*" Oh! child of the nineteenth century, I pity you from the depths of my heart!

Now, for the moment, we have to do with Bourges—how to get there? It cost me some trouble to find out, so excuse me if I explain. You go to Orleans—that is simple enough; Orleans is on the high road to everywhere; meaning the Loire, Tours, Nantes; or the Spanish frontier, by Poitiers, Angoulême, and Bordeaux. But to come here you go to none of these places. You get out at Orleans, and into a slow little train, which creeps over an interminable marshy heath, reminding one of Chat Moss, that triumph of English engineers. Presently you come to Vierzon, and here again you diverge on to another and still less important line, which in an hour's time deposits you at Bourges.

"Bourges, then," observes the untravelled, "is an unimportant place after all. What do you go there for?" *Pardon*; Bourges is the ancient capital of Berri; and you know, or ought to know, that the father of the legitimate king of France derived his title hence. The father of the exiled Henry V., commonly called Comte de Chambord, was Duc de Berri. He was assassinated

in 1821, and his widow was that heroic Madame of whom such exciting stories are yet told in Brittany. She only died in 1864, a brave woman, who would have saved France, so far as she knew, from endless troubles and a doubtful future—*toujours à recommencer*.

Secondly, Berri is the native country of perhaps the second greatest French author of this century. I give the first place to Honoré de Balzac, the second to Georges Sand. She loves it, and has given the most charming descriptions of its familiar landscape. She has an estate therein, where she lives like a Lady Bountiful, one of the many phases of her many-sided nature.

Thirdly, Bourges possesses one of the four great cathedrals of France; Amiens, Rheims, Chartres, are the other three.

Fourthly, Bourges has a particular association for the British public. They do not know much of French history, it is true; the grand, the picturesque, the romantic scroll, which descends from Pepin and Charlemagne to the feet of the last lone and childless son of the Fleur de Lys, is almost an unknown writing to the Englishman, who yet can boast of Alfred, of the Black Prince, and great Queen Bess; but there is *one* French king, immortalized by Sir Walter Scott in his *Quentin Durward*, and familiarized by Charles Kean, at the Princess's Theatre, with whom we are all acquainted. His crafty intellect, his superstitious devotion, his peculiar cap with the metal images of saints, his abominable hypocrisy, his love of the Scotch Mercenaries, and the clever way in which he began to assert the predominance of the monarchical power above that of the feudal *seigneurs*; all these things are pretty well known to the reading and the play-going public. Well, Louis XI. was born at Bourges; his father, Charles VII., the king whose kingdom was saved by Jeanne D'Arc, was driven here by the English, and so beset that at one time he was more rightly to be called king of Bourges only than king of that France which was really in the hands of his natural enemies, our honourable selves. Such are the titles of Bourges to a respectful interest. They would look well in a gazetteer; they occupy a couple of pages in Murray's *Handbook of France*; but what geography, what handbook, can ever give the least idea of the living beauty and interest of these old French cities? To define their charms is as difficult as to say why peaches ripen. It is not only beauty, though they are rich in that; I saw to-day the cathedral of Bourges rise flat and grey across a patch of water bordered by tall poplars, and marvelled at its adaptation to all accessories; to a foreground of gardens, and equally to its architectural approaches by gable-ended streets. But it is not beauty only. It is tradition, romance, the regretful sense of that which is fast disappearing. It is reverence for our fathers, anxiety for generations to come; it is the idea and the charm of the past, the present, and the undeveloped future, all wrapt in one vision of other days.

First and foremost, of the Cathedral of Bourges. How shall one translate it into words? A few zigzags from the inspired pencil of Pugin would better suffice. Yes, even better than a photograph, for Pugin gave in his sketches not merely the beauty of the thing represented, but his own vivid appreciation of it; so that in looking at his marvellous sketches of foreign architecture one seems to see it with Pugin's eyes.

All day, from morning to evening, I have been in and out of this cathedral, examining its details by the help of a very good guide, written by one of its own clergy—written, consequently, as a man writes of his native land. Well, then, the present edifice is the fourth of its name and race, the first having been built A.D. 250, in the days of Roman Gaul. The legend says that St. Ursin, the apostle of Berry, and first archbishop of Bourges, was allowed to build it on the ground of the Roman Palace, or Governor's House. It was rebuilt in A.D. 380 by another saint, and again in the ninth century. Some fragments of this last erection yet remain, but the glorious church now called St. Etienne de Bourges was built early in the thirteenth century, in what we call the "Early English" style. Perhaps it is our familiarity with its long sombre lines which makes it so inexpressibly beautiful to English eyes.

The construction is singular, the external situation eminently picturesque; high above the ramparts at the extreme south-east of the town, and having a large garden crossed by avenues of limes between it and the wall. It is a long building, without transepts, and with a double aisle on each side of the nave; the mid walk thus formed having been intended for processions. The perspective flies away like that of Westminster Abbey, and is lost in a glimmer of painted glass. The pillars are immensely high, and their plain simplicity increases the effect; some architects have even objected to the extraordinary height; but their defence is that they "lift up the hearts" of the beholder. *Sursum corda* is their everlasting response.

Then the number of these columns—they form a forest of stone. Taking them altogether, large and little, and counting those composite ones of which Sir Walter Scott says that at Melrose they were—

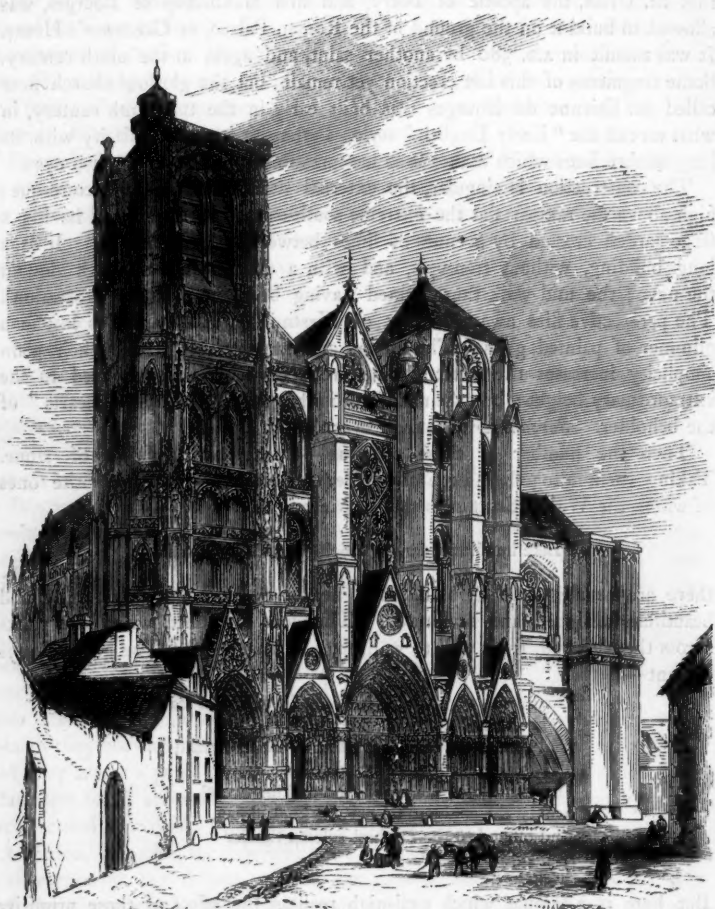
"Like bundles of lances which garlands had bound,"

there are nearly three thousand, and nearly every capital is carefully and beautifully designed and sculptured. Therefore the effect, when one walks across the west end, from wall to wall, may be imagined. "The groves," says Bryant—

"The groves were God's first temples, ere man learned
To hew the shaft, or lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them—ere he framed
The lofty vault to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down,
And offered to the Highest solemn thanks
And supplication."

But here is a temple which well-nigh realizes the effect of those primitive groves, and it is perhaps due to its imposing height and the vast scale and simple breadth even of its detail, that it is much less *molested* by false ornament of a temporary kind than most foreign cathedrals. Here are no bad pictures, no gilded constructions of the taste of Louis le Grand. All belongs to the earlier and purer epochs of French art. The altars are small, and such of them as are modern have been restored after ancient models. The images of saints in the chapels which surround the exterior aisle are small,

and of a refined character; and the wrought-iron work which separates the choir from the nave is extremely delicate. Thus there is nothing to distract the eye from the great architectural conceptions here so wonderfully carried out. And through this vast building the population ebbs and flows all the Sunday like the waves of the sea. I spent nearly the whole day in the cathedral,



CATHEDRAL OF BOURGES.

examining the chapels between the services, and was much struck by the way in which it was really used by the people. Cold as was the weather, it had a warm look. In the afternoon the mighty nave was paved with a dense mass of human beings to hear a preacher from Paris. The men had the advantage, being grouped in the neighbourhood of the pulpit. Outside

them, on every side, were the white caps of the Berrichon women, intermingled with the bonnets of the fashionable ladies. About five o'clock the great congregation broke up, streaming through the several doors to the thunder of the organ, as twilight began to darken the aisles, which are always dim, even at noon, so rich is the painted glass. It was spared in '93, because it would have been so expensive to reglaze even with white glass. But eighteen windows were sacrificed, I believe, in the middle of the last century, because the worshippers could not see to read their prayer-books—a remote consequence of the invention of printing! The painted windows which remain are covered with Bible stories. They are among the most beautiful in the world.



"THE HOUSE THAT JACQUES BUILT"—THE FAÇADE.

There is a subterranean church, which hardly deserves to be called a crypt, so fair and lightsome is it. It contains some monuments, finely sculptured, which were deposited from the upper church in '93. I need not say that from the tower one sees far and wide over Bourges and the flat plains of Berri, where the vine is largely cultivated.

Then I went over the roofs of each aisle, there being a considerable space (as in the dome of St. Paul's) between that which is seen from below and the exterior. Oh! the enormous masonry; oh! the forest of beams. All strong, and straight, and smooth, and six hundred years old. A real forest must have been sacrificed to build St. Etienne. This walk was agreeably diversified by crawling up a stone staircase with wide iron rails outside one of the flying buttresses. It was not till we had moved considerably to one side that I had any conception where we had been; passing through the mid air on a narrow, sloping bridge of stone which looked a mere nothing. "Everybody asks to go

up that staircase," said the good Suisse, triumphantly. Query, whether they wish to do so *twice*. I am glad to say we came down from the roof quite another way, or I think I should have stayed up there unto this hour.



THE COURT.

On the Monday morning I threaded the narrow winding streets, in which a stranger inevitably loses his way, until I found the second antiquarian treasure of this old city—the magnificent mansion of Jacques Cœur, the Gresham of France. It is such a famous place, this “House that Jacques built,” that every child in Bourges will point you the way.

If I were a rich merchant, with galleys upon every sea and trucks upon every railroad (since one should suit one’s illustrations to the times in which one lives), I can imagine nothing more delightful than the building for myself a palace such as this commercial prince of the middle ages built for himself and his people; a home which from top to toe, from balustraded roof to deep cellar, was symbolical of his name, his trade, his tastes, his very humours. His dwelling must have fitted Jacques Cœur as its skin fits an animal. All its quaint architectural corners seem, as it were, wrinkles and creases, whereby it adapted itself to the nature and genius of the man. We, in our day, know nothing of such a style of building. If we want a large house we send for an architect, who submits his plans to our enlightened judgment; allotting ample stairs, a sufficiency of best bedrooms, kitchen, butler’s pantry, &c. If rather less, then rather cheaper; and as to making the slightest difference in style on account of our late pursuits; as whether, for instance, we were a retired candlestick-maker, or a lord chancellor, or a physician, the very idea would savour of lunacy. *Egalité, fraternité*—are not we all alike in our stature, in our physical wants, in our deep content with bricks and mortar? Let us build

and plaster our houses with our own tails, like the beavers, only with somewhat less *finesse* and ingenuity, We know already what the result will be; we run no unknown risk. It will be Baker-street on a small scale, Victoria-street on a large one.



BACK OF THE HOUSE.

Not so Jacques Cœur. This man wished in dying to leave a beautiful shell behind him, so that the passers-by might say "Here lived a great merchant; he had a wife, sons, and a daughter, and numerous domestics. He liked his money, but loved art more; he kept a negro; he was pious, also loyal. He didn't mind fighting if needs must be; but preferred commerce and politics. He loved Bourges, and Bourges loved him; for he paid his workmen well." All this, and more, Jacques Cœur contrived to write in legible characters on the walls of his house, some of it on the outside, some of it on the inside, To this day it testifies what manner of man he was; own brother to Whittington and to Gresham; akin to the princes of Venice and of Holland; a man of manifold energies, who abided by his family motto, "*à vaillants Cœurs riens impossible.*"

The pedestrian traveller, while pursuing the narrow street which bears his wholly plebeian name (James Heart, neither more nor less), turns suddenly through the ornamental gateway, whose door is adorned with an elaborate knocker, the hammer of which strikes upon a *heart*, stands transfixed in that elaborate court, and asks, "But who was he, this man of ample wealth and ampler brain?" It is easy to answer. He was a contemporary of Jeanne d'Arc, and did for his king by his gold what she did by faith and the sword. Jacques Cœur and the Maid of Orleans may be represented as upholding the crown of France in those days. Charles VII. was not worth either of their devotions, and Providence probably considered his abominable ingratitude in bestowing upon him Louis XI. for a son. Jacques Cœur was born at Bourges, his father being largely engaged in trade. Jacques wedded, while quite a young man, the daughter of the provost; her name was Macée de Leopart. When he built his house he paid due honour to his wife, whose portrait and

family arms appear in several places. He extended his father's trade immensely; was concerned in the coinage both of Bourges and Paris—a sort of master of the mint; and his thoughts were engrossed by large schemes of commerce, full of their own poetry; for in 1452 he went to the East to make personal acquaintance with men and places, and on his return to France he fixed his commercial head-quarters at Montpellier, covered the Mediterranean with his ships, and had agents and commercial travellers in all directions, many of whom afterwards became eminent, testifying to the sagacity of his choice. Does this little description convey the idea of a real man? Not a mere historical figure, buried in dry words, but a genuine creature, rising from honour to honour; lending only too much money to his king, sent on delicate foreign missions, even to the pope; getting so alarmingly rich that jealous people naturally desired his fall and pickings.

In person he was slight and nervously framed. His face was very peculiar, and he had an astonishing forehead. Except that there was a strong development of the imaginative element about the temples, this countenance suggests to the modern beholder somewhat of a likeness to Lord Brougham. It does not add to the *unity* of his portrait that he caused himself to be drawn in the guise of an angel, with tall wings and a quantity of yellow hair flying behind. That was *une petite fantaisie du moyen âge*; the unmistakable visage is there all the same.

This ugly genius being, as aforesaid, enormously rich, bought in the year 1445, about four hundred and twenty-one years ago, a piece of land situated on the ramparts of the town, and set to work to build. Tradition says it cost him a hundred thousand golden crowns, which is, I believe, somewhere about 240,000*l.* On the *outside*, that which backed upon the rampart and moat, it took the shape and aspect of a fortress; on the town side it literally broke out into blossom. The accompanying woodcut is necessarily on too small a scale to give other than an idea of the general effect of the court. It is covered with symbolic sculpture, or with domestic portraiture. For instance, the panels of the pointed tower upon the left are each occupied by two servants, women sweeping with brooms (new, let us hope); small retainers; a female, the housekeeper perhaps, giving alms to a beggar; and half way up are himself and his wife. He holds a hammer, the symbol of industry, called by a French proverb *le clef des arts*. Over the kitchen door (right in the corner, with little steps leading up to it) is a sculptured panel of cooks and scullions, busy over their fire. One would need long ladders and good eyes to enter into the spirit of these strange bas-reliefs, which are of the funniest, the most familiar description. Of course his handsomest room looked into this court, and in the recess over the entrance he set up a figure of himself riding upon his mule. The chapel is within this gateway; it was very high before it was barbarously divided into two storeys. You see the window shooting up to the roof. Here it was that Jacques caused Italian artists to paint himself, his wife, his children, and various relations, all in the guise of adoring angels.

It is not to be supposed that Jacques Cœur could spend much time in his handsome reception rooms. When at home he appropriated to himself certain little round rooms in that strong tower at the back. The view is

taken from what *was* the moat, now the Place de Berry. Observe that there are no windows near the bottom. Some way up is his study, his little domestic office, where he wrote his letters and did up his accounts. Above that, fenced from the staircase by a strong iron door and wonderful lock, which still works unwearied after four hundred years of duty, was his vaulted strong-room. It is said he had a hole made in the floor, through which he could pitch his money and himself down into his study, supposing that robbers were attacking his strong-room. The corbels in this room are extraordinary. One is said to reveal the secrets of his future disgrace; an interview, political perhaps, with Agnes Sorel, the king's mistress, to which the king was a concealed party, perched up in a tree. Jacques is represented as becoming suddenly aware of the king's presence by seeing his face reflected in a fountain. It is impossible to say if this is the true interpretation of this quaint bit of sculpture. There is something peculiarly whimsical in the idea of Jacques causing it to be portrayed in his secret strong-room, as if to remind him of possible dangers in the future.

Above this room runs an external gallery, of which the balustrade is ornamented with alternate hearts and cockle-shells, indicative of pilgrimage. Here he came into near neighbourhood of the chimneys, and consequently he trimmed their tops with the most delicate stone frills. And along the roof line he laid a neat cover or hem of lead, which he gilded with hearts and cockle-shells, and here and there a little statue, such as that of monk, knight, or pilgrim. Under the eaves of the observatory chamber is a portrait of his negro, hugging his coffer; and a little further on an angel affably holding his coat of arms. A shield in another place bears the arms of another rich commercial family allied to his own—*fleurs-de-lys* interspersed with bales of silk or wool. In a similar spirit, the roof of a fine gallery is neither more nor less in construction than the reversed keel of a ship; and the massive chimney-piece represents a fortress, and has two little dormer windows atop, with folks looking out of them.

Now does not the home represent the man? Is it not full of him even to the present hour? Fancy him showing all these queer or poetical devices to his admiring friends. Fancy Madame Cœur and her maidens going busy about the household work amidst their own portraits, and their own coats of arms, and their own mottoes, smiling at them from every door-post and window-sill. Jacques Cœur was great in the way of mottoes. Besides his chief one, which he sculptured on a balcony overlooking the street,

"A vaillants cœurs rien impossible,"

he had two others, deeply characteristic of the man he must have been. This,—

*"A close bouche,
Il n'entre mouche;"*

and this,—

*"Entendre, taire,
Dire, et faire,
Est ma joie."*

And now for a sad ending to so great a man; sad in that he was uprooted from his native place, and died an exile, though he found a glorious death.

He fell into disgrace with his king, probably because he had lent him too much money. He was arrested, and his property fell temporarily into the hands of the monarch, but was afterwards partially disgorged, and one of his sons got possession of this splendid dwelling. He himself, accused of several crimes, such as coining bad money, selling arms to the infidels (that was how they treated a matter of steam rams in those days), pressing men to man his ships, selling a Christian slave who had taken refuge with one of his captains, etc., etc., was condemned to banishment and confiscation. Being, however, unlawfully detained in prison, he contrived to escape, got to Rome, and found great favour with the pope, Nicholas V., at whose death he was named by the successor in St. Peter's chair captain of an expedition against the heathens. He is supposed to have been wounded in some combat, for he is known to have died in the island of Chios, and was buried in the church of the Cordeliers, a not unfit ending, according to the ideas of those days, for a merchant prince of France.

The Hôtel Jacques Cœur, now converted into the Hôtel de Ville of Bourges, is by no means the only relic of the domestic architecture of the renaissance existing in the city. The Hôtel de Lallemant also owes its origin to a family of financiers. In 1487 Bourges was almost levelled to the ground by an awful fire; two-thirds of the city suffered, the trade of the place was almost burnt out, and never quite recovered. One Jean Lallemant, with his two sons, having thus lost the house in which they dwelt, and which must have been, like so many others, of sculptured wood, resolved to rebuild it in fair and fine stone. It was done, and that which they wrought is yet to be seen. In 1825, having hitherto been a private house, it was bought by the municipality, and the *Sœurs de la Sainte Famille* were installed therein. These sisters teach eight hundred little girls gratuitously. They show the hotel to strangers for a trifling sum, which they devote to charity. The ceiling of the ancient oratory is worked in panels, each one differing in subject. The court is ornamented with medallions, several of which were spoilt in that fatal year, '93." To it are uniformly referred all the vandalism of Bourges, just as in England we lay it all to that unhappy Oliver Cromwell. The Hôtel Cujas is so called from having been inhabited by a famous lawyer of that name, but it was not built by him. It dates from 1515, somewhere about the date of the earliest part of Hampton Court. It is of brick, with stone ornaments, very graceful and beautiful. The great professor of law, Cujas, was an elder contemporary of our Shakspeare; he died in 1590. In his earlier life he accompanied the Duchesse de Berri to Turin. Possibly Portia may have profited by his lessons. See the historic charm and the romantic associations of these old houses!

Scattered through the steep and winding streets of Bourges are many other fine old dwellings, which yet have no special name. There is one in the Rue des Toiles, another in the Rue St. Sulpice, and were it possible to penetrate the secret of many another, what staircases, what vast apartments, what quaint sculpture, what elegant columns might we not discover! The town is a treasury of architectural art. Last year some gentlemen, supposed to be English, came and bargained greedily for the ceiling of the oratory of the

Hôtel Lallemand. They offered a mint of money for it; perhaps they wanted to put it up in the Crystal Palace; but, *Dieu merci*, they were refused. The oratory was built three hundred years ago, for the honour of God and the delight of men, not for a show, nor for reference in an architectural dictionary. It is *Berrichon*, in Bourges let it remain. We, who have Salisbury, Wells, Maplestead, and many another glory of mediæval art, need not go begging and stealing our neighbours' goods. If you wish to see the glorious treasures of Bourges, church and city, *come and look for them*.

BESSIE R. PARKES.

GARIBALDI.

WHEN the convalescent hero of Aspramonte visited our shores two years ago, and drove through our streets in a light-grey suit and a round hat, reminding one forcibly of a second-rate swell at the sea-side, those who, like the writer, had seen him often on the battlefield, in his coarse red shirt and with no hat on at all, may have thought he was hardly doing himself justice.

Very unconsciously, however, that great and simple gentleman went about amongst us, wearing such a hat, perchance, because it was cheap—such a coat because it was cool, and wondering, not without gratitude and love, at the un-Italian “Hoorays” which cheered him by day and woke him up in the night. Probably most of us who shouted and stared gave him full credit for the prodigious results of the last Italian campaign; but how many remembered that this was only one of a long series, and, in many respects, the least arduous of them all? The greatness of this man will be understood when his whole life is better known; it will then be seen that there has been an absolute unity of purpose throughout the whole of it, and that every succeeding year has only served to fill in the details of one and the same vast and romantic design. As some men are born with an irresistible instinct for the chase, or a life at sea, so was Garibaldi born with an instinct for conquest; and it is his great glory never to have used it for purposes of self-aggrandisement, or otherwise than as a means of elevating and relieving oppressed and suffering humanity. The following pages are a very brief tribute to the past life of Joseph Garibaldi.

1807–1836.

Garibaldi was *Duke* of Bavaria, A.D. 584, his ancestors having curiously enough discarded the name of *King*. Leader of the people, not their king, was as much a Garibaldian title one thousand three hundred years ago as it has become since the well-earned distinction of Joseph Garibaldi, born at Nice, July 22, 1807. His father was a merchant; and it was no doubt whilst cruising about in the Mediterranean that Joseph early acquired that love for the sea and that mastery over ships which, combined with his later knowledge of men and land service, has made him a perfectly amphibious commander.

The first sight of Rome kindled in his boyish heart a confused sense of his country's greatness and of her degradation. As Luther brooded over a reformed faith, as Columbus dreamed of a new world, so the obscure Italian boy mused over the redemption of beautiful but fallen Italy. "I everywhere sought for whatever might enlighten me," he writes; "for books, for persons whose breasts responded to my own." One such, at least, he found in the eloquent St. Simonian Emile Barrault, whose deep piety and burning patriotism left their indelible impress upon his young disciple's heart. "Our country!" exclaims Garibaldi. "I first heard him talk of Italy as 'Our country!'"

He learned from him what was then the real condition of Italy, and what were the hopes and the plans of that little band of patriots, hardly one of whom has survived to see the triumph of liberal opinions. His worst fears were confirmed. From Palermo to Venice, from Venice to Savoy, from Rome to Naples, all was tyranny or misrule. The insecurity of life and property throughout Sicily betrayed a slovenly government. The brutal ignorance and indolence of the low-browed and filthy Neapolitan told of long poverty and a spirit hardly free enough to feel its own fetters. The swarms of priests who muttered their venal masses in the Roman temples, or walked about in their shabby cassocks, with eyes askance, and the peculiar look of men at once sensual and ashamed; or the great, gilt, dingy-red coaches, with the shrivelled, dingy-red cardinals inside them, always going to and from the Holy Father's palace, seemed to say plainly enough that the wolf had got into the shepherd's coat, and exchanged his pastoral staff for a sceptre. Whilst, as the eye travelled northwards from Venice, west and south all over the fair Lombard plain, the white-coated Austrians were seen settling down everywhere, like a swarm of wasps in an orchard when the fruit is ripe.

Whilst Garibaldi was brooding in silence over these mournful facts, he fell in with the young apostle of *La Giovanna Italia*—Mazzini. Mazzini, ablest of agitators, worst of leaders, first supplied him with a definite creed, as he had already formulated the vague hopes and aspirations of thousands all over Italy. A revolutionary paper was started, and immediate action commenced. The enthusiasts who had been favoured by Charles Albert, as Prince of Carignan, were frowned down by Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, and the movement consequently assumed that unconstitutional aspect which it has until quite lately maintained. A descent upon Savoy, a few arrests, the banishment of Mazzini to England, and the narrow escape of Garibaldi in disguise, brought the first act of the Italian revolution to a close. Italy was not sufficiently roused, the old powers were not sufficiently shaken; the Sardinian cabinet seemed growing more bigoted every day. The time was not yet.

SOUTH AMERICA. 1836-1847.

The scene now changes to the wide pampas plains, tropical forests, and broad lake-like rivers of South America. The voices of patriotism were silenced for a time in Italy, but other kindred voices seemed to call the world-wide patriot across the Atlantic. The Republic of Rio Grande was

struggling with the Brazilian government for its freedom. In 1836 Garibaldi sailed into its smooth and commodious harbour. He found the Republican President, Ben Gonzales, and his brave secretary, Livio Zambeccari, in prison.

He immediately placed himself at their disposal; and receiving orders to confiscate Brazilian property by sea and land, took command of the entire Republican fleet, consisting of one small smack with a gallant crew of sixteen men. Sailing proudly out of the harbour mouth, he landed on a rocky island hard by. "I stretched out my arms," writes the chief, "with proud and happy emotions, and my lips burst forth into an eagle cry from his highest eyrie. The boundless ocean was my empire, and then I took possession of it." Presently came sailing out of the harbour an unsuspecting vessel, with the Brazilian flag; the little crew were down upon it in a moment. Under the very batteries of Rio the prize was seized without bloodshed. The crew were politely landed some way down the coast; the Garibaldians scuttled and sank their own poor little ship and sailed off with a fine cargo of coffee. But before the cargo could be sold at Monte Video, suspicions were aroused; an order for the arrest of the ship and crew was out. The cargo had indeed been sold to a merchant, but had not been yet paid for; they must either fly instantly with loss, or surrender at discretion. There was an hour to spare. Garibaldi, with a loaded brace of pistols in his belt, and disguised in a long cloak, strode through the streets of Monte Video, appeared before the astonished merchant as he was quietly smoking his pipe after dinner; walking close up to him, he applied a pistol to his breast, with, "My money!" Every farthing was paid, and the ship slid out of the harbour with the sunset wind.

The second act of such a drama of suffering and valour as the world has perhaps never witnessed was now fairly begun. Whilst running between two Brazilian ships, who accompanied him for half an hour, sweeping his decks with their murderous broadsides, his crew was decimated and he was shot through the neck. Slowly recovering from this wound, he was seized on landing by the notorious Rosas, dictator of Buenos Ayres, and by the directions of his subordinate, the brutal Millau, hung up for two hours by his thumbs, and nearly beaten to death; he was then thrown into a loathsome prison and tortured for many months. Nothing, however, could extract from him the names or the plans of his colleagues. But freedom and health never long forsook their darling, and he was soon again cruising about the lagunes of Los Patos, making small prizes and resisting fearful odds. Nor was he less active by land: not unfrequently, after firing shot and chain cable away, his amphibious crew had to leap into the water and gain the woods. This was the signal for the well-organized bands of Brazilian guerillas to turn out against him; here it was, in numberless encounters, that Garibaldi established his solitary supremacy in this style of war. Garibaldi is a very sure and a very cool shot, as well as a consummate swordsman. On one occasion he was surprised in his wooden barracks by a colonel and one hundred and fifty horse. Alone with his cook and sixty loaded muskets, he shot down all their officers, and kept the band at bay till his own handful of men came rushing back through the enemy's rear, and completed the rout.

But the loss of many brave companions began to weigh upon the spirits of the chief: the blood of these noble hearts was being poured out like water, and yet hardly could the Republic be called safe for an hour. To complete his trouble, two of his ships were wrecked; in his own were six of his most devoted companions; not one of them escaped, and for a brief season at least he seems to have been prostrated with the deepest grief. Such seasons, it would seem, are not unfavourable to the development of the domestic affections. A young Brazilian lady, Anita by name, consoled the hero for the loss of his companions. Dark, like the tropical Creoles, possessed of singular grace, perfect physique, and endowed with a high and dauntless soul, the very counterpart of her lover's, a more perfect marriage could not be conceived, and the cannon in the harbour of Laguna were the bells which rang their wedding chimes. The Brazilian commander, who had resolved to crush out the rebellion, had blockaded the town. The Republican fleet sailed out and offered battle. For five hours the cannonade was incessant. Garibaldi's own ship was almost down to its gunwales in the water, but he never ceased firing; his other ships were riddled with shot, but not one gave in. At last the Imperialist squadron, fairly exhausted with the repulse, drew off at the very moment when their enemies were sinking, decimated but victorious.

Thus commenced Anita's honeymoon. She pointed the first gun, and constantly took the place of the dead and wounded. When knocked down by the wind of a round shot, and entreated to go down below, "I will go," she said, "but only to drive out the cowards that have sought concealment there." She soon dragged up three hapless wretches, who from that hour fought like lions.

At the battle of Coritibani she was taken prisoner whilst caring for the wounded. She escaped, leaped on a fiery horse, and galloped to the nearest forest. There lay between her and her husband sixty miles, a wilderness of giant reeds and towering pines alive with venomous reptiles and beasts of prey. Night and day she urged on her brave steed. At length emerging upon the banks of the river Canoas, she swam the swollen torrent and reached her husband in a state of complete exhaustion, not having tasted food for four days! In a moveable camp, with no physician near, and hourly expecting an assault from the great guerilla, Colonel Morinque, she bore her first son, Menotti (1840). "Anita," writes her husband, "a few days after her confinement had been compelled to get on horseback with her poor babe laid across the saddle, and then to take refuge in the woods in a pitiless storm!" These frequent wanderings in the woods were full of extreme suffering for all the fugitives. The rain often poured in torrents for days, the thick matted undergrowth of reeds and pampas-grass afforded shelter for swarms of poisonous snakes, and often proved an almost impassable barrier. The best guides lost their way. The provisions were soon gone; many died of fever, others perished with cold, hunger, and exhaustion. Meanwhile it was going ill with the Republic of Rio; the chiefs were at variance with each other; the great question of independence was degenerating into a party squabble. For six years Garibaldi had served them faithfully, until at length disappointed and tired out, he collected a drove of cattle, and abandoning for ever a cause which

had ceased to be worthy of him, set his face towards the south, and arrived at Monte Video in 1841. He seems to have supported himself here by teaching mathematics in the schools, and carrying round, as he himself tells us, "samples of every kind, from Italian paste to Roman silks;" but the Monte Videans, who were at war with the dictator Rosas, induced him to join their cause, and the formation of the famous "Italian Legion" was the immediate result. This little band repeated at Monte Video the famous exploits of the Republicans at Rio. Time would fail me to tell of the gallant defence of the town and harbour of Monte Video; how the Garibaldian ships sailed forth to offer battle to the whole Brazilian fleet, whilst the inhabitants thronged the quays and roofs of the houses until the whole bay resembled a vast amphitheatre crowded with spectators; and how the Brazilian fleet thereupon declined the combat. Nor can we pause over the numerous encounters with the terrible Ouribes, who gradually got so great a distrust of himself that he was wont to give way or ever they could get at him with the bayonet.

On February 8, 1846, day for ever memorable, Garibaldi fought his last and greatest American battle, with one hundred and ninety of "The Legion" against one thousand two hundred horse and three hundred infantry, on the plains of San Antonio. "My sons," he said, as the foe was seen charging up from the distance, "the enemy are many, we are few; more glorious will be the victory. Be steady, reserve your fire until they are close on you—then fire, and at them with the bayonet." But the enemy reserved their fire, and at sixty yards poured in a deadly volley. Many of the legion fell, the rest stood motionless, without reply. In an instant, as the enemy came on with a rush, Garibaldi had galloped to the front, and "Fire!" then "Charge!" and the little band passed clean through the enemy's ranks, and attacked the cavalry flanking them. The engagement ended with a "fighting retreat," and when the sheltering forest was gained, and the night came down, thirty of the legion were left dead upon the field, and fifty-three were badly wounded. The report of this battle spread like wildfire through North and South America, and reaching Europe, seemed in the eyes of all Italian patriots to surround the already beloved name with a prophetic glory.

ITALY. 1847-1848.

On March 27, 1847, with about one hundred of the legionaries, Garibaldi sailed for Europe. The times were growing ripe. The whole of Italy, like the soil around Vesuvius, was volcanic with the suppressed fires of revolution; sudden jets were seen flaming up from time to time. Suppressed in the north, the fire would burst out in Rome, and then for a season explosions would take place in Sicily, and spending themselves, pass over to Naples and the mainland. Venice, Milan, Rome, Palermo, Naples, these were the great national stations between which the electric shocks of Italian freedom were to vibrate. But the war commenced with a fatal blunder; the services of Garibaldi and his legion were rejected by Charles Albert, then at the head of a popular movement to drive the Austrians out of Italy. Indeed it was more than suspected that the king would have been glad to see that

section of liberalism represented by our hero extinguished. The government feared the spirit of revolution—the king, a formidable and popular rival. Garibaldi, believing both himself and the cause betrayed, issued his famous proclamation of the 12th August, 1847, declaring war against both the traitor-king, Charles Albert, and the Austrians. Doubtless there were mistakes on both sides. The king had been wrong, but his great subject had also erred in violently severing interests which were in fact identical. Of course the quarrel between them could never be patched up, and it is hardly to be regretted when we remember how wisely in his treatment of Garibaldi, Victor Emmanuel has profited by his predecessor's mistake.

After an armistice had been agreed upon between Charles Albert and the Austrians, Garibaldi, with about five thousand men, attempted to continue the war; but it was the old story of a kingdom divided against itself. No permanent territorial results were effected for Italy; the Quadrilaterals still frowned, Venetia still mourned her independence; but those few hand-to-hand encounters with the Austrians, that apparently fruitless and desultory warfare on the lakes, established for ever Garibaldi's prestige, and inspired Italy with that blind confidence in her champion which she has never since lost.

Towards the close of the campaign Garibaldi was attacked with the marsh fever, which soon turned to typhus. There seemed little chance of his recovery. He lay prostrate and almost insensible at Lerino. One cry only had power to rouse him, "The Austrians!" In the confusion and panic caused by the chief's illness, a body of twelve hundred Austrians rushed into the little town, and the slaughter had already commenced in the streets. The fever was forgotten, the dying man sprang from his couch; in another moment he was at the head of his legion, and the Austrians were flying before him. Without resting, the troops pushed on to Varese, here they discovered that the Austrians had retired to cut off their retreat to Switzerland—a barrier consisting of the finest army in the world must be crossed. There was not a moment to lose, and at Mazzarene, Garibaldi, with five hundred of the "legion," forced a bloody passage through an army of ten thousand Austrians, and passed safely into Switzerland. Thus ended the campaign in North Italy, but only to make way for the more important events in the south, which were themselves but a brief and fiery prelude to the great and apparently irremediable catastrophe.

THE SIEGE OF ROME. 1848-1849.

In the fall of the year 1848, the Pope, hearing that the "Great Bandit" was collecting his forces at Ravenna, ordered a couple of Swiss regiments to go and "throw Garibaldi and his followers into the sea." A few days afterwards, the Pope himself was obliged to fly to Gaeta—the standard of the Roman Republic was raised—the Triumvirate proclaimed, and Garibaldi himself within the walls of Rome. No blood had as yet been shed; but the great struggle was close at hand. The Pope was the head of the Catholic world. France might be well disposed towards the Republic, but the rights of the Holy Father must be protected. Thirty-five thousand troops, under

Cavaignac, advanced upon the city; behind them loomed the Austrians in the distance; even Spain sent a few regiments, and the Neapolitan army approached from the south. Thus hemmed in by four enemies, with a scanty horde of brave, but many undisciplined troops—insufficient arms and ammunition, Garibaldi prepared for the defence of Rome. On the morning of April 30, 1849, Garibaldi attacked the French army outside the gates. He led charge after charge in person, and after fighting for seven hours the French were compelled to retreat along the road to Civita Vecchia, leaving three hundred prisoners in the hands of the Romans, and fifteen hundred killed and wounded. This is not the only occasion in which Garibaldi has defeated some of the finest troops in the world in the open field. The Austrians fared no better at Varese and Como; and when we hear that the Guerillero would soon be annihilated if he attempted to oppose either France or Austria openly, it is worth while to remember that he has more than once fairly repulsed them both. Upon this occasion the French were so crippled that they prayed for an armistice, and Garibaldi, finding himself at liberty, immediately set off to meet the Neapolitans, who were advancing upon Rome. On these expeditions he took very few with him—a small band of picked officers and veterans, most of them belonging to the Italian legion. The chiefs were mounted on horses; each was armed with heavy pistols, and carried a long whip; they wore the red shirt and the Roman felt hat. The men never knew where they were going to; their movements were often as intricate as they were rapid; Garibaldi alone held the threads of the tangled skein. Like a magician—he shook his wand, there was no army; he beckoned, and men came up from the woods and down from the hills, charged the enemy who the moment before thought themselves in a desert, charged back again, and disappeared, leaving the bewildered foe nothing to charge in return, and very little left to charge with. The poor Neapolitans, who were great cowards, and very superstitious, appear to have advanced the first time with tolerable pluck, and to have been repulsed with some loss, but the second time they met the enemy they fled so fast that Garibaldi was unable to overtake them, and gave it up.

The figure of the mounted chief, in the red shirt, filled them with supernatural terrors; the rumour had got abroad that the Devil himself was commanding in person. Sabres blessed by the Pope were shivered to bits against him; and even holy silver bullets would not hit him. Leaving his Southern foes with these satisfactory convictions, Garibaldi hurried back to Rome, just as hostilities were recommencing.

During the truce the French had received overpowering reinforcements, and proceeded further to improve their position by a signal act of treachery. Twelve hours before the conclusion of the armistice, as the clocks of the city were striking midnight, on the 3rd of June, a French column glided through the darkness towards the Villa Pamphili.

"Who goes there?" cried the sentinel.

"Viva l'Italia," said the French. In another moment the sentinel was poinarded, and the Villa Pamphili was in the enemy's hands.

"I was roused," says Garibaldi, "at three o'clock, by the sound of cannon.

I found everything on fire. When I arrived at the St. Pancrazio Gate, the Villas Pamphili, Corsini, and Valentini, were all taken." These were the keys of Rome's defence; and placing himself at the head of a column, Garibaldi led a furious charge. "For a moment the Villa Corsini was ours," he writes; "that moment was short, but it was sublime; the French brought up all their reserve, and fell upon us all together. I have seen very terrible fights. I saw the fight of Rio Grande; I saw the Bayada; I saw the Salto San Antonio; but I never saw anything comparable to the butchery of the Villa Corsini!" The Corsini was not retaken, and thus from the first day the fate of Rome was decided.

"From the moment," says Garibaldi, "that an army of forty thousand men, with thirty-six pieces of siege cannon, can perform their works of approach, the taking of a city is nothing but a question of time. The only hope it has left is to fall gloriously."

We cannot follow the history of this romantic siege. The people were fighting not for victory, which they felt was lost, but for a principle—to show the whole of Italy that they were in earnest—that they would have Rome sooner or later. Every day now beheld deeds of unparalleled heroism. Here might be seen the young Colonel Manara, who led the flower of the Lombard chivalry, riding up to the battery's mouth and sabreing the gunners in person. The tried Colonel Medici was ubiquitous, and second only to Garibaldi in the order and completeness of his tactics. In the pauses of the combat Cicero Vacchio, with blood-stained shirt and sword still reeking with the slaughter, poured forth a torrent of eloquence and rekindled in the fainting troops the expiring flames of patriotism; whilst Ugo Bassi, in his monk's dress, held the crucifix before the eyes of the dying, and careless of the bullets which showered around him, pointed to the freedom of the skies. He was captured on the barricades whilst supporting the head of a dying soldier, but restored by the French general to Garibaldi. His devotion gained the admiration of both friends and foes; he was often in the thickest of the fight, but carried nothing but the cross.

Garibaldi's daring station was in a tower of the Casino Savorelli, overlooking the trenches and within half carbine shot of the French *tirailleurs*. "It was curious," he says, "to see the storm of balls which rained around me. The balls caused the whole strong house to shake as if from an earthquake; several times I had my meals served in the steeple in order to give the French marksmen the amusement of trying to hit me."

On the 13th of May the French opened a general bombardment, breaches were made in several places, the earth was also mined, and the enemy came up under ground into the city. A tremendous fight now ensued, so tremendous, that a momentary truce followed, both armies were completely exhausted. The streets were choked with mutilated bodies, all the Roman gunners had been killed at their guns, the batteries had kept on firing till every gun was dismounted. A deep silence succeeded to the clash of arms and rattle of musketry, the living seemed stunned and paralysed, a heavy sulphurous cloud hung over the city; but on the 29th the demons of war rose, as it were, with a yell from the heaps of the dead, and again besiegers and besieged met

in the shock of a deadly hand-to-hand encounter. Night brought no cessation of hostilities. A violent storm had been gathering unheeded, and burst towards sunset in all its fury over the city. "Ah, it was a terrible night!" writes Garibaldi. "The artillery and fury of the skies mingled with that of earth, the thunder answered responding to the cannon, the lightning ran its livid lines across the path of the bombs." The last struggle was at hand. Two hundred paces behind the walls of Rome is the ancient inclosure of Aurelian; into this Garibaldi threw a large body of troops, with orders to defend it to the last. Their numbers were soon diminished to about half, their guns silenced, but no word was spoken of surrendering—they continued to advance, to fire, to drop. Then was seen a thing unheard of in the annals of war—a reserve of the wounded volunteered to take their turn in the trenches, and men were seen with the blood still trickling from their breasts, with bandaged heads and broken limbs, fiercely spending themselves in a last convulsive effort. On the 29th, at midnight, Garibaldi went into the Aurelian trench to lead the last charge. "On that terrible night," writes Vecchi, an eye-witness, "Garibaldi was great indeed, greater than anybody had ever known; his heavy sword flew like lightning, every one he smote fell dead before him, the blood of one washed from his steel the blood of another,—we trembled for him, but he was unwounded—he stood firm as destiny."

At two o'clock Garibaldi was recalled by the deliberative assembly under Mazzini, then sitting in the capitol. "When I appeared at the door of the chamber," he writes, "all the deputies rose and applauded. I looked about me and upon myself to see what it was that awakened their enthusiasm. I was covered with blood, my clothes were pierced with balls and bayonet thrusts, my sword was jagged and bent and stood half out of the scabbard, but I had not a scratch about me!"

VENICE. 1849-1850.

On the 2nd of July the Triumvirate resigned their power, and the authorities undertook to treat with General Oudinot. On the same day Garibaldi assembled the Roman troops in the great square in front of St. Peter's, and addressed them as follows:—

"Soldiers, all I have to offer you is hunger, thirst, the ground for a bed, the burning sun as the sole solace for your fatigues; no pay, no barracks, no rations; but continual alarms, forced marches, and charges with the bayonet. Let those who love glory and do not despair of Italy, follow me."

About four thousand infantry and eight hundred horse, with baggage waggons and artillery, followed him in that memorable retreat of the 2nd of July, 1849, which would alone be sufficient to establish the general's title to military fame. At the very time the French were watching the gates the whole of Garibaldi's army passed out of the walls unobserved, and were fifteen miles off by daybreak. To give an idea of the skill and precision with which the General's movements were executed, we need only say that within an hour after the last column left Orvieto the French in pursuit occupied that town.

We hasten to draw a veil over the sad scenes of wandering, suffering, and

disappointment which now followed. Many of his ablest generals were killed, the troops were daily thinned with privation and discouragements of every kind, and desertion was frequent in the ranks. With diminished forces, ill supplied and worn out with fatigue, the dauntless defender of Rome turned his eyes towards Venice. He had still but one programme—as long as a man would follow him he was ready to fight for Italy. At San Marino he was hemmed in by overpowering numbers, and to avoid surrendering disbanded his army, and then with sixty of his dearest officers and men cut his way through the Austrians and reached the coast. He was going with that devoted band to capture Venice!

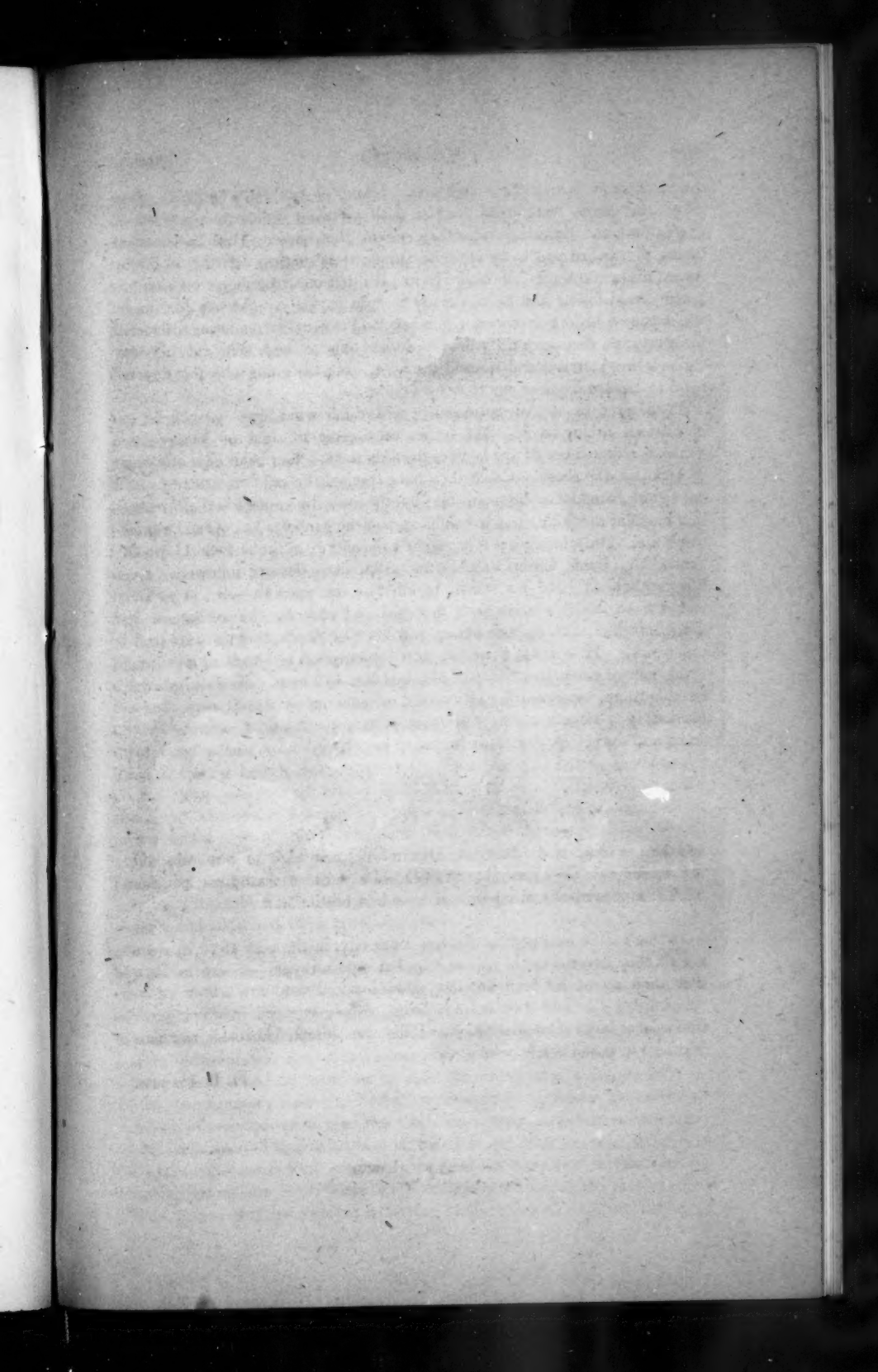
In the grey of an August morning, with a fair wind blowing, they set sail in thirteen fishing-boats. At sunset they came in sight of Venice; two gunboats steamed out of the lagunes towards them. Garibaldi gave the order to tack for the shore. Could they have reached the coast in time, escape, if not victory, would have been possible; but the cowardly sailors lost their heads—in a moment the flotilla was in confusion, and the gunboats had opened a point-blank fire. Only four boats ever reached the shore; in the last was Garibaldi, Anita, Ugo Bassi, Cicero Vacchio, and a few more devoted followers. Even this small band dared not remain together on the enemy's soil. Ugo Bassi and Cicero Vacchio were soon captured and shot by the Austrians, and Garibaldi fled with but one officer, and his wife Anita, then far advanced in pregnancy. This devoted woman had accompanied her husband all through the Lombard campaign, and had followed him to Rome. Now, in almost a fainting state, weakened by every kind of suffering and privation, she was hurried in a rickety carriage over rough roads, obliged at times to hide in rocks and forests, for the Austrians were in pursuit, and a price was set upon the heads of all the Garibaldians. Arriving on the ground of the friendly Marquis Guiccioli, Garibaldi carried his wife into the nearest cottage, where, as soon as she had drank a little water, she expired in his arms. She was hastily buried in a neighbouring field; and here, parting at once with his wife and the last of his staff officers, the Dictator of Rome, who a few months before had been a victorious general at the head of eighteen thousand patriots, found himself a proscribed and lonely wanderer in a hostile land.

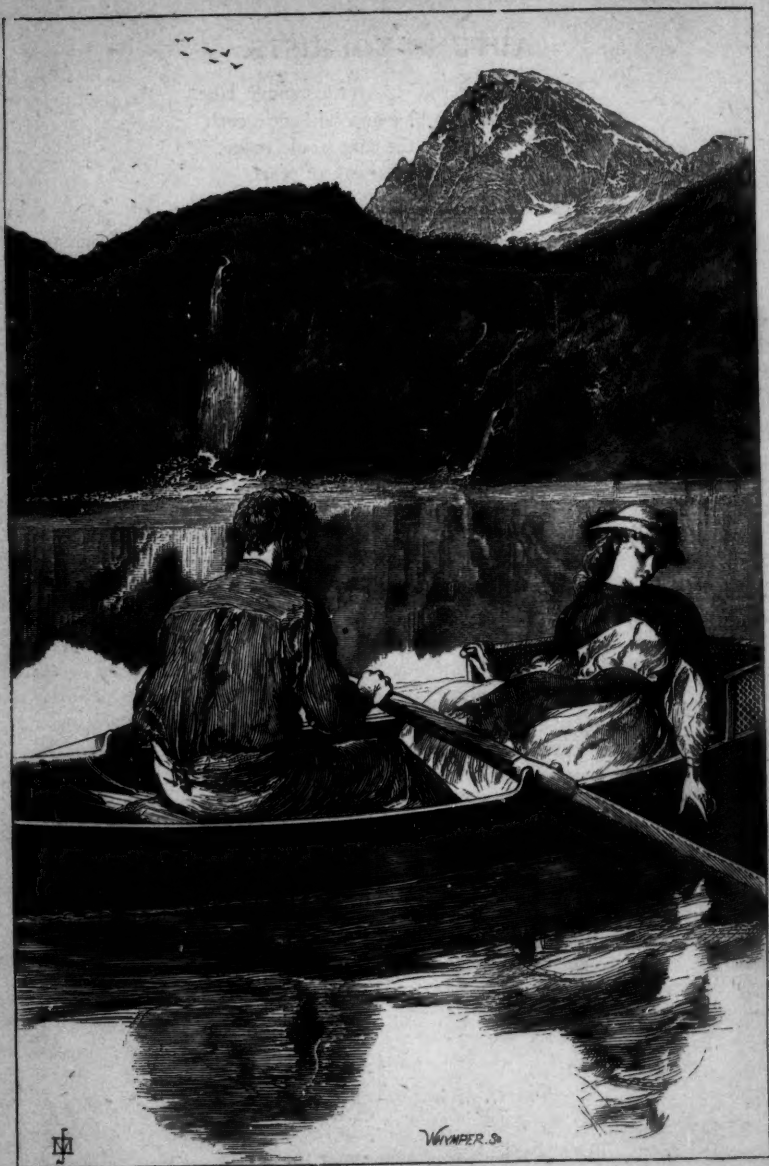
In one of the back streets of New York city, in the year 1850, there was a little shop devoted to the sale of soap, but especially candles. At the back of that shop might be seen any day, and all day, a man with a bronzed complexion, tall forehead, and reddish beard, deeply engaged in dipping wicks into a large bowl of melted tallow. This was Joseph Garibaldi, the hero of Monte Video and the hope of Italy.

H. R. HAWES.

(To be continued.)







"AUTUMN TOURISTS."

AUTUMN TOURISTS.

THEY were rowing over a summer lake,
 A lake deep blue and without a curl,
 Save just the ripple the oars would make,
 And the shoreward streak of pearl.

High over the water the mountains rise,
 Deep under the water the mountains fall;
 You may fathom the depths and mete the skies,
 But the heart is deeper than all.

Some one said, "We shall miss you so,
 "Robin, when you are away so far!"
 And he said, with a smile, "It is hard to go,
 "But things must be as they are."

"He can smile, so will I," she thought,
 With her rosy fingers over the brink;
 "But O! some lessons are hard to be taught;
 Some cups are bitter to drink.

"The time that is past, like yonder shore,
 Grows fainter and fainter under our sight;
 God!" she prayed, "if I see him no more,
 Help me to bear it aright!"

She groaned to herself, "I must look in his eyes,
 And thrill and bear the touch of his hand,
 Then go on alone 'neath the pitiless skies,
 When the boat has touched the strand."

"Be a man, and care as little as she!"
 Thought he, as they neared the farther shore;
 "Love is not made for fellows like me,
 So farewell for evermore."

"A pleasant time it has been," he said;
 "I wish we could have it over again."
 "Ay," all bitterly murmured her heart,
 "For pleasure is kin to pain!"

"We see people better in foreign lands,
 Perhaps the fogs are too thick in our own,"
 She said, frankly giving him both her hands,
 Not a touch of pain in her tone.

Then as the shore grated under the keel,
 She said, as she lightly stepped from the boat,
 "How real and solid the pebbles feel
 After all one's visions afloat."

The white towns glistened and glowed in the light,
 And the children gathered to gaze,
 And the sun poured down with a pitiless might,
 As they went their several ways.

Straining of eyes and waving of hands,
 And the trifles that make or mar—
 These must happen in all the lands,
 And things must be as they are.

D. W.

FROM TEHERAN TO TREBIZOND.

THE Persian capital appeared to me, at first sight, the very seat of civilization and culture—a place in which European life was to be enjoyed to the full. To be sure when a traveller from West to East arrives in the city, he is disgusted beyond all power of expression at the wretched mud hovels, and the narrow, crooked lanes, through which he must pass. But the city appears in an entirely different light to one who has come from Bokhara. The latter place is only sixty days' journey from Teheran; but there are really centuries between the social condition of the two cities. As I rode, for the first time after my arrival, through the bazaar, I surveyed with childish delight, nay, with a wonder and admiration which was scarcely less than that of my Tartar companion, the numerous articles of luxury from Europe—stuffs, cloths and toys. But what especially attracted my notice were the glasses of Bohemian manufacture. The specimens of European art and industry then inspired me with a respect which now, as I recall it, seems exceedingly droll. But it was impossible to feel otherwise. When a man travels as I did, and when he has as carefully and completely adopted the Tartar mode of life, it is no wonder if in the end he himself becomes almost a Tartar. That *incognito*, in which a man is thoroughly conscious of his own real nature in spite of his outward disguise, cannot be of long continuance. The effect of always concealing his genuine sentiments, and of living in constant contact with foreign elements is, *volens volens*, to change the man himself. In vain does the disguised traveller inwardly struggle against such influences. The Past gradually, but surely, withdraws itself into the background, and is at last almost effaced by the ever-recurring impressions of the Present, and thus the feigned character, in spite of struggles against it, becomes the real one.

The change in my nature and my behaviour was at once remarked upon by my European friends and afforded them subject for much mirth at my expense. They laughed at my salutations, at my gesticulations when speaking, at my gait, and, especially, at my manner of looking at things. Nay, many even went so far as to assert that my features were changed and had assumed a Tartar character, and that my eyes had become more oblique than they were formerly. Many of their observations were very humorous, and greatly

amused me. Still I could not help feeling a peculiar pleasure at the idea of again taking part in the life of Europe. But besides the fact that a quiet stay of some weeks' duration in one place had become for me an extraordinary occurrence, there were many European customs and habits to which I could with difficulty submit. The clothes especially were irksome; they all seemed to me too tight. The hair on the head, which I now allowed to grow again, was felt to be a burden. So, too, when I saw several Europeans gathered together and gesticulating in a lively manner while engaged in some friendly dispute, they looked to me as if on the point of falling upon one another, carried away by the heat of controversy; and the stiff military carriage and firm tread of the French officers in the Persian service struck me as odd, and almost ridiculous. Yet I could not help feeling a secret pleasure as I observed the proud bearing of my fellow-Europeans. This seemed to me the more remarkable from the contrast which it presented to the slovenly, slouching gait of the Central Asiatic, to which my eye had been so accustomed. It would be tiresome both for my readers and for myself were I to detail all the many strange feelings to which the appearance of Teheran at that time give rise. To one who knows the difference between life in the East and the West, it is scarcely necessary for me to say that by comparison with Bokhara Teheran seemed to be a Paris.

Great was the astonishment of the Persian world in the capital, when the successful issue of my perilous adventure became known. *Keiman* (the art of dissimulation allowed by Islam) is an art well known and diligently practised by Orientals; but it was to them something inconceivable that an European should excel them in it. Without doubt they would have grudged the successful termination of my journey, had it not been that the joke I had played at the expense of their arch-enemies, the Sunnite Turkomans, tickled their fancy. Although Persia is nearest neighbour to the steppes of Turkistan, yet the most confused and erroneous ideas prevail about the latter in the Persian capital. Everybody came to me for information on the subject. I was invited by several of the ministers, and enjoyed even the great happiness of being presented to his Majesty, the "Centre of the World," the "Highly exalted Ruler of the Universe," as the Persians call him. I had to endure tedious ceremonies, ere I found myself in the presence of the Nasser ed din Shah in the garden of the palace, and received from him the affable invitation to relate the wonders of my experiences. I acquitted myself in this with no little vivacity. The ministers who were present opened their eyes wide with astonishment at my boldness, and, as was afterwards observed, could not sufficiently wonder at me, who could support, without trembling, the looks of a prince whose least glance made the boldest to quake. As for the king himself, he seemed pleased with my account of myself, for he afterward sent me an order of honour, and, what was still more valuable, a Persian shawl. The first, a simple piece of silver, I was allowed to receive, but the latter, which was of the value of at least fifty ducats, the minister thought best to retain for himself, which course of conduct is at the court of Teheran in no way astonishing. His majesty the king lies and deceives his ministers, and their excellencies repay him with the same coin. Inferior officials cheat the people, who in turn cheat them. In that country every one lies, cheats,

and swindles. Such conduct is withal regarded as the most natural in the world, while a man who deals honestly by those with whom he has to do is looked upon as a fool or a madman.

By way of further illustration of what I have just said, I will relate a neat little story which occurred during my stay in Teheran. The king, as is well known, is an ardent sportsman, and an excellent shot withal. He spends about two-thirds of the year in hunting excursions, to the no small annoyance of the court officers, who have to exchange the rich food, the soft pillows, and the other pleasures of the harem, for quarters in a tent, long rides, and the frugal fare of the peasantry. On his return the king is accustomed to make presents to the European ambassadors out of the game he has killed, the receiving of which is considered as a special mark of his favour. Nevertheless these gentlemen are obliged to give in return for the roe, partridges, and other game laid low by the royal hand, a handsome *enaher* or gratuity to the servant who brings them. At first they allowed themselves to rest contented with this inconvenience, but, as these royal gifts became too frequent, they speedily arrived at the conviction that the king's servants brought the things from the market, merely for the sake of the expected fee, and without the knowledge of their master. To provide against the continuance of this practice, they requested the Minister for Foreign Affairs to certify in all cases to the authenticity of the royal presents by sending with them a few lines. This proved efficacious in repressing the nuisance for the time; but soon after the favours of the king again arrived with a suspicious, not to say unpleasant, frequency. Again strict inquiries were made, and it was found that His Excellency the minister was in the same boat with the servants of the royal household; he furnished the required certificate for the game they had bought in the market, and then shared the plunder with them. The whole business was regarded as a very fine joke, whereby the Feringhis were properly taken in, and even the king himself laughed heartily when he heard of it.

As I had to await the approach of spring, I was obliged to stay at Teheran two months. My time was pleasantly spent in the society of the little European colony there. They felt an unfeigned joy at my return, and rivalled each other in congratulations, while they sought to render my stay agreeable by all sorts of obliging actions. The embassies did not fail to acquaint their respective governments with my remarkable adventures. The whole seemed to me ludicrous enough, nor could I make out what there was in the Dervish-trick which I had just played that was of so extraordinary a character. I was not a little proud as I left that capital to find myself provided with letters of recommendation to the principal statesmen of England and France. I was especially touched by the interest exhibited by a Hungarian countryman of mine, Mr. Szántó, who plies the trade of a tailor in Teheran. This singular man was born in a village on the banks of the Theiss, and had quitted his native country to avoid the conscription, as he preferred manœuvring with the light needle rather than with the heavy bayonet. He betook himself first of all to Constantinople. From thence he went through Asia Minor to Arabia; and thence again through South Persia to India; making all these journeys for the most part on foot. He had the intention of proceeding

to the capital of China, when he heard of the revolutionary movement in his own country in the year 1848. This news inspired the patriotic tailor so much that he determined to hasten home for the purpose of fighting under the banner of freedom. But India is very far from Europe, especially for one whose means will not allow him to avail himself of speedier and more expensive conveyances than sailing ships, so that by the time he had reached Stamboul, he was met by the report of the catastrophe of Világos. Thus disappointed, he betook himself again to wandering and to plying his needle, and reached Teheran by way of Tabreez. When I found him in the former city, he spoke a most extraordinary language, which was in fact a farrago of all the dialects spoken in the different countries through which he had travelled. In the beginning of a conversation he got on pretty well, but no sooner did he warm with his subject than Hungarian, German, and French were jumbled together with a still more confusing mass of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Hindustani words, which sorely tried the comprehension of his hearers. His honest heart was overjoyed at the happy escape of a countryman from so many dangers, and by way of showing his feelings he pressed me, in spite of his straitened circumstances, to accept a pair of pantaloons of his own making. As, however, I resolutely declined to accept the present, he contrived to persuade my Tartar to take it. The inhabitant of Central Asia laughed loud and long at what seemed to him a ridiculous garment, but at last curiosity induced him to put it on, and the good Szántó was almost beside himself with delight and pride at having been the first tailor who had put a Tartar into a pair of European trousers.

Among the Europeans whom I met here, I must also make mention of M. de Bloqueville, the most costly of all photographers, who, in the service of the Shah, took part in an expedition against the Turkomans, in which he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner, and was at last released only on payment of the enormous ransom of ten thousand ducats. M. de Bloqueville, a perfect French gentleman, and withal an excellent and amiable young man, following his natural bent for an adventurous life, had made an excursion to *la belle Perse*. To be a doctor, which is the almost exclusive profession of European adventurers in the East, seemed to him too common. He sought, and at last found in photography, an art which, in that country, is less used up. The king immediately engaged him, and he was attached to the army of Khorassan in the capacity of painter of battle-pieces. How overjoyed was the king at the thought that he had thus secured for the gallant feats of his heroic army an immortality of glory, in which every one of them would be portrayed as a very Rustem! Unfortunately fate had ordered it otherwise. The twenty-five thousand Rustems were fallen upon by five thousand Turkoman robbers, and utterly routed. No small part of them were led away captive, and, from the great number of slaves suddenly thrown upon the market, many of them were bought back for the moderate ransom of from five to six ducats. M. de Bloqueville was about to be released for the same sum, but the Turkomans suspected that the fair-haired youth must be an exotic product. More therefore was demanded for him, and, inasmuch as with every refusal on the part of the Persians the sum demanded was increased, at last the court of Teheran had to consent to pay ten thousand ducats for the French

subject. This however it would assuredly not have done, had it not been that the great Shah on the banks of the Seine had informed them, through his ambassador Bellaunay, that if the Persian king had no ducats wherewith to ransom his subject he would lend him bayonets. So terrible a hint could not be disregarded, and the money was paid, but a year and a half had been already spent in negotiations. During this time M. de Bloqueville, sometime officer in a regiment of the guards, had a very unpleasant position, and leisure enough for studying the contrast between the life of a gentleman in the Champs Elysées and that of a captive among the Turkomans, loaded with irons both on neck and feet. How often must the unfortunate Frenchman have thought of gay Paris as he shivered in rags beneath the insufficient shelter of a Turkoman tent, with cutlets of horse-flesh the greatest culinary delicacy within reach! Yes, he had suffered a great deal, and as he saw me safely returned from the same country in which he had been a slave, he wept for joy. He had had better opportunities than any other of my friends of knowing the reality of life in Central Asia, and could thus appreciate better than the rest the hardships I had gone through.

Now that we are on the subject of Turkomans, I must not leave unmentioned that certain of these sons of the desert, who were at Asterabad on business, hearing of my arrival in Teheran, came over to see me, and strange to say required from me my *fatika* (blessing). They assured me that all my *fatikas* had had most satisfactory effects, and that the people in the Gömu steppe longed to have me among them again. Although I was dressed in European clothes, these simple people reverently bowed themselves before me, while I gave each my blessing, citing at the same time a few verses of the Koran; after which they retired much edified. This was the last occasion on which I performed my spiritual functions. The idea of my religious celebrity awoke in my mind fantastic dreams. If I had had a somewhat greater passion for adventures and a little more boldness, what might I not have been able to accomplish among those superstitious children of the wilderness! Such is usually the way in which oriental heroes commence their career. They envelop themselves in a mysterious magical obscurity, and hundreds follow them blindly, and will only is wanted to make a man an autocrat whose least order is obeyed with ready submission.

With the very first breath of vernal air I bade farewell to the Persian capital, the seat of oriental civilization, and took the regular post-road through Tabreez, Erzeroom, and Trebizond to the Black Sea. As on my journey from Meshed to Teheran I was well equipped for an oriental traveller, so on this journey from Teheran to Trebizond I was provided with all the comforts appropriate to an European tourist: better horses and weapons, more money, and, as one may easily conceive, more respect and compliments from those I met on the way. Playing and joking, I reached the Persian frontier in most beautiful spring weather. I met with a kind reception from the European colony in Tabreez. The clinking of the champagne glasses round the hospitable board of the English consul was a foretaste of the joys which awaited me in the West. My imagination painted in the liveliest colours of hope the future before me, which glanced like the figures of a kaleidoscope before my dazzled eyes; and though the reception which I afterwards received actually

surpassed my expectations, I must confess I was happier when my triumph was as yet in expectation.

As I crossed the eastern frontier of Aderbijan, the hilly country which borders on Turkish Kurdistan, I could not refrain from turning round to cast one last look on the soil of Iran. Iran, with all its faults and all the blemishes of its oriental civilization, is still a country of great interest to the European traveller. The arts of hypocrisy and dissimulation, which have here founded a tyrannical empire, appear to us odious and contemptible, and thrust into the background the good qualities of the Iranians—their polite manners, and their remarkable mental capacity—and yet it is in Iran alone that we can find such mental talents, and such striving towards a higher culture, which here equally inspires prince and peasant. The rough, wild manners, which prevail in the provinces of the eastern border, are also to be remarked on the western. The Kurds and the Osmanlis of Asia Minor are far behind the Persians, just as if they had been made out of quite different raw material. Yes, Iran is the fountain, and, up to the present time, almost the only seat of ancient Asiatic culture.

When I had arrived in the neighbourhood of Trebizond, and had climbed that steep Pontic mountain from whose top the Black Sea is first visible, and which has been so enthusiastically described by Xenophon in his *Retreat of the Ten Thousand*, there saw I in the blue waters of the Euxine the last of my dreams borne to its grave. With what an anxious heart had I turned my back on this coast two years before! With what difficulty did I separate from the flag of the *Lloyd*, which seemed to flutter as if greeting me! Now on my return I saw it again—the same flag, in the same harbour, and in the same month.

How various were the emotions which stirred my bosom at the sight! To have reached the shore, where a ship rode at anchor ready to start, was the same thing as to have already reached Europe. When, in addition to all this, one has at one's disposal a splendid and commodious cabin on board the *Lloyd* steamer, it is easy to feel oneself already surrounded by European civilization and comfort, even though one is several days' journey distant from the place of one's destination. I spent only two days in the ancient capital of Mithridates. During that time I sold the greater part of my requisites for oriental travel, which had now become superfluous, reserving a few as relics and memorials of my wanderings. Then in the middle of May I went on board the steamer, which bore swiftly on its way towards the southerly Bosphorus. The distance increased ever more and more which separated me from the shores of Pontus. Long and sorrowful were the glances which I threw towards that shore which had seen the beginning of my wanderings as far as the distant capital of Timur, and had now seen their end. The images of that past once more passed in review before my eyes, grave and gay, as they had been in reality. But I soon recovered myself from such musings, and turning my face from the past and Asia, I bent them towards the scene of my future—toward Europe.

ARMINIUS VÁMBÉRY.

A STROKE OF GOOD FORTUNE:

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SHIRLEY HALL," ETC.

IT was late in the autumn of 18— when I left my lodgings in Ramsgate, where I had been residing during the season, to return to London. As I was not pressed for time, I proposed to journey by the steamboat instead of by rail. Rightly or wrongly, I considered the sea air and iodine obtained by the voyage a most efficacious alternative, and one especially well adapted to the constitution of a sedentary literary man.

There were few passengers on board the boat, as by far the greater portion of the visitors had already left Ramsgate; besides the day was squally and threatened rain. We left the harbour, and went on to Margate, where we took on board a few more passengers, and then proceeded on our voyage to London. Sunshine and showers now alternated, the wind, the while, blowing somewhat briskly, which had the effect of driving almost all the passengers into the cabins. Another person and myself were, for some time, the only individuals on deck. He sat in the fore part of the boat, while I continued my solitary walk, from one end of the vessel to the other. It was not long before I began to perceive the fore-cabin passenger eyeing me attentively, as if he were acquainted with me. I looked at him narrowly, but could not recollect ever having seen him before. Judging from his appearance he was by no means of the class a gentleman would like to associate with. He was upwards of fifty years of age, and very shabbily dressed. He wore a rough soiled greatcoat, had a large woollen comforter round his neck, and on his head a misshapen hat. His shoes were old and dilapidated. He wore gloves on his hands, but there was not a finger which was not greatly in want of mending. The form of his face was not by any means objectionable, but even this redeeming point was, to a considerable degree, dimmed by a beard of at least three days' growth, and a complexion which unmistakably showed the man to be a drunkard.

He continued to gaze intently at me each time I passed him. At last I was somewhat annoyed at his conduct; and a shower of rain coming on, I plunged into the after-cabin, where I remained for some time occupied with my newspaper. But the close atmosphere of the place so oppressed and disgusted me before long, that I was forced to go upon deck again. I determined to treat myself with a cigar, and having lighted it, I, of course, went forward, no smoking being allowed "abaft the funnel." Fortunately the disreputable-looking man was no longer on deck, and I seated myself on the seat at the boat side, and puffed away at my leisure. A shower came on, and, as my cigar was only half finished, I descended into the fore-cabin to finish it. There I found the *bête noire* of my journey. He was seated at the table, evidently half tipsy, and with a glass of rum and water before him. I sat down at a table, the furthest from him, and, taking no notice of him, pretended to be wholly unaware of his presence. He continued to gaze fixedly at me, and at last I got so annoyed that I threw away my cigar, and was just about to go on deck again, when, on passing the table at which he was seated, he said to me—

"Don't you know me?"

"No," I answered, abruptly.

"Is that really the case? To speak truth, I suspect you want to cut me."

"I told you truly, that I do not know you," I said, angrily. "Why should you imagine I would tell a falsehood about it?"

"Well, don't get out of humour," he said. "I thought it probable you might not like to speak to me. When I was respectable I know I should have been sorry to have been seen speaking with any one so disreputable-looking as I am now."

"I trust you are respectable still," I said; "but tell me who you are, for really I have not the slightest remembrance of you."

He watched me attentively for a moment, and then said—

"My name is X—, I was formerly clerk at Messrs. — (naming a well-known publishing firm who were among my first patrons), and you used to know me well enough then."

I looked at him, and by degrees recognized his features, though they were fearfully altered for the worse. It was difficult to believe that so great a change could have come over the appearance of any man. Formerly he had been remarkably neat in his person and gentlemanly in his manners, and, as I have before stated, his appearance was now completely the reverse.

"I remember you perfectly well now," I said, "and I acknowledge with gratitude having several times received favours at your hand. Why did you leave the firm? I know they used to have a very high respect for you."

"I was dismissed for drunkenness," he said, with a coolness which surprised me; "but I am proud to say they had no other fault to place on the debit side of my account."

"Had you no complaint to make against them?" I said.

"Not the slightest; a more honourable firm is not to be found in London. In fact, I wonder they put up with me so long as they did. Even now I have occasionally to thank them for acts of liberality which I have certainly no right to expect at their hands."

"If it is not an indiscreet question," I said, "what induced you to contract the vice of drinking? I should have thought you the last man in the world to have been guilty of anything of the kind."

"I thank you for your good opinion," he said, "and I believe I was formerly not undeserving of it. Without being a teetotaler, a more strictly sober man never lived than I was when you knew me. I contracted the habit of drinking as most other people do, *gradually*. It was no love of the vice, or any absurd wish for conviviality that made me take to it. I was led to it by that same power which changes many other sober people into drunkards—sorrow."

"Might I ask the cause of your sorrow? Were you unfortunate in business?"

"I never started in business on my own account. I was quite content with the appointment I held. It was not a very lucrative one, it is true, but I was content. My sorrow was caused by—a stroke of good fortune."

"I confess I do not understand you," I said.

"As the rain continues," he said, "it will be impossible for you to go on

deck, so if you remain here, I will prove to you, if you like, that a stroke of good fortune may be as prejudicial to a man's happiness as the most serious misfortune that could befall him."

"Go on," I said, smiling, "that will be a curious problem to work out."

Well then (said he), to begin. At the time I knew you, I lived at Camberwell. I had a wife and two daughters, and two finer or more amiable girls than they were, or a better wife than Margaret then was to me, it would have been impossible for any man to have. My income was not large, but it was sufficient. I had a hundred and fifty pounds a year; and if four people could not obtain many luxuries upon a sum of the kind, certainly we suffered no privations, and, more than that, we had some amusement, and a great deal of happiness.

There lived in the neighbourhood an old lady, a Mrs. Clarke, who had taken a great fancy to the girls. She was a widow without children, with no relatives but distant ones, and even with these she was on no very good terms. Except that she was comfortably off, we knew little about her, for she was exceedingly taciturn and reserved about her affairs. She took a great fancy to the girls, and occasionally treated them to the theatre and other places of amusement, as well as made them little presents. Once she took them for three months to Brighton, and they returned home much benefited both in health and appearance. Of course she used to joke the girls frequently about getting married. She promised when that event should take place to give Margaret, the elder, a present of an old-fashioned gold watch, and Alice, the younger, a silver teapot and cream-ewer, which she said had been her father's, and for which she had a great respect.

The old lady died very suddenly one day, to the great and genuine grief of us all. In her we lost a very dear old friend to whom we were much attached, notwithstanding her many little pettish peculiarities. I was invited to the funeral, and obtained a day's holiday for the purpose of attending it. When I left the house my wife and daughters were in tears. On arriving at the house of mourning, I found in it the solicitor, the doctor, and two or three old ladies, distant relatives of the deceased. I used the word mourning just now, but really there was not the slightest appearance of grief shown by any one of them. I believe I was the only person present who was really sorry for the loss of the good old soul. The ceremony was duly performed, and we returned to the house, where the will was read. I was little interested in the matter, seeing that I had not the slightest expectation from her. In her will she left many bequests. A hundred pounds to an old servant who had married out of her house, two sums of fifty pounds each to the two servants who were then residing with her, and five hundred pounds each to several distant relatives. To my elder daughter, Martha, she left the gold watch as she had promised her, and to the younger the silver teapot and cream-jug. She then left divers moderate sums to different charities, the whole amounting, in fact, to far more than I imagined she was possessed of. To my great surprise, however, the will concluded by her naming my two daughters as her residuary legatees.

"But," I said to the solicitor, before I left, "will there be anything over for them to receive?"

"Oh yes," he said, smiling; "I cannot exactly say how much. Although it may seem unprofessional on my part to make an offer of the kind, I shall be very happy to give them seven thousand pounds apiece for their chance if they will let me take all that shall exceed that sum, while I, on the other hand, will make good all that shall fall short of it."

I was perfectly astonished at the intelligence; it seemed to me like a dream. My two poor girls who, when I left home in the morning, might have calculated their whole assets as somewhere under five pounds each, were now each of them possessed of a moderate if not ample fortune. Even when I quitted the house and got into the open air I could hardly believe the intelligence, and I walked leisurely home, reflecting in what manner I could best break it to my family, knowing that joy sometimes has as prejudicial an effect as grief. I at length reached home. One of my girls opened the door, and I entered the parlour. Darkened as it was by the blind being down to its fullest extent, I could easily perceive that my wife and daughters had been crying bitterly during my absence, and their prayer-books lying on the table told me that they had been occupied during my absence in reading the funeral service. For some moments after I had seated myself no conversation took place between us. My wife at length broke the silence by asking me who were present at the funeral, and whether everything went off properly. I gave her a description of the whole affair, which she and the girls listened to attentively. When I came to the opening of the will I described to them the several legacies which had been left. I told Margaret that the old lady had bequeathed to her the gold watch and to Alice the silver teapot and cream-ewer.

"Bless her!" said Margaret, "she was a dear old soul, and we shall miss her sadly."

"I had no idea she was so wealthy," said my wife.

"But I have not yet finished," I remarked. "She has named the two girls her residuary legatees."

"What does that mean, papa?" said Alice, the younger.

"That whatever is over will be divided between you and your sister."

"Will there be anything to speak of?" inquired my wife.

"I thought there would not, and inquired of the solicitor, who told me that he should be very happy to offer the girls seven thousand pounds each for their chance."

For some moments there was a dead silence, so overwhelmed were they at the intelligence. The first who appeared to comprehend it fully was my elder daughter Margaret. She leaped from her chair, and, clapping her hands joyfully, exclaimed, "Now I will never ride in a second-class carriage again."

"Nor shall that fellow Johnstone ever pass off his clumsy boots on me again," said Alice, who had a remarkably neat foot and ankle; "I will soon find out another shoemaker. When shall we receive the money, papa?"

"My dear," I said, "I think before you trouble yourselves about that, it will be necessary to know what mourning you will wear as a mark of respect to the dear old soul that's gone."

"Certainly," said my wife, "we ought to see about it immediately. It will, at any rate, show people that we are not ungrateful for the kindness we have received from her," she continued, mechanically drawing up the window-blind which had been pulled down out of respect for the funeral.

As the old lady's solicitor was an honest man, and none of the legatees had a disposition to quarrel, the estate was quickly wound up, and my daughters were soon in possession of their property. As they were both under age (Margaret, the elder, still wanting a few months of being twenty-one), I was of course their guardian.

The first thing we did, after we had procured very handsome mourning, was to entertain the question of moving to a different locality. My wife found that although many very respectable people resided in Camberwell, still those whose acquaintance we might make among them would always remember that we had hitherto lived in a very ungentee street. Besides, it would be annoying if those we had been accustomed to visit should continue to call on us. She had certainly a great respect for them all; but still, she said, it was our duty as parents to consider the welfare of our girls, and to introduce them into such society as would prove beneficial to them. I endeavoured to prove that Camberwell had hitherto suited us perfectly well, and I could not see why we should now quit it. My wife, however, held a contrary opinion, and as she was backed by the girls, it was resolved that we should remove to the far genteeler neighbourhood of Paddington. I was powerless in the matter, and they immediately set out in search of a house. One was at length obtained which suited them exactly. It was a showy-looking place with plate-glass windows, the front being profusely ornamented with stucco mouldings. The bedrooms were not much better than our own, but the reception rooms, as we began to call them, were certainly handsome; in fact as much so as plaster and gilt cornices could make them. I had an impression that there was more show than respectability about the whole affair, but I was overruled.

Furnishing now commenced, and some very expensive articles were purchased. I remonstrated, but was told by my wife that as the girls bought them with their own money I had no right to interfere. I objected to the legality of the decision, as they were both under age; but I was obliged to give way, though I did so both in sorrow and in anger. It was the first time my children had ever opposed my wishes in any material point, and my sorrow was increased by the knowledge that my wife had encouraged them in their disobedience.

The house was at last furnished, all arrangements were completed, and we entered on possession. I am sorry to say that when we quitted Camberwell, we parted finally with many estimable friends, my wife and daughters considering they were hardly genteel enough for our new position in society, although the ostensible reason put forth was the great distance between Paddington and the neighbourhood we had left. Being now fully established in — Terrace, my family began to form acquaintances with those who, to use their own phraseology, were in our own position in society. I cannot say I liked the acquaintances they made. They were certainly respectable, but among all of them there was a tendency to vulgar

show, the most of them living up to the full extent of their means, if not beyond it. Among the ladies were several mothers with families of marriageable daughters whose only doweries were much gentility, little education, and no money. Among the men, again, were several who were clerks in public offices. These I liked best. True, their incomes were small, and hardly any of them could be regarded as good matches for the girls; still they were steady and well-conducted. There were also several young men of no particular qualifications, who appeared to consider trade as beneath them, and were yet without the ability to attain eminence in any profession. However, things went on smoothly enough, no great reason arising for complaint on my part, till I found that my wife and daughters now began to think my position as a publisher's clerk somewhat derogatory to their position in society. My wife broke ground by asking me whether, with our family prospects, and my highly-respectable connection, I could not start in business on my own account. I told her it was impossible. It would require a large amount of capital, and I had none whatever.

"But, my dear," said my wife, "I was this morning talking the matter over with the girls, when I told them that I thought your want of capital would be the objection; but Margaret said that sooner than papa should remain in the employment of anybody, he might make use of any portion of her property he pleased; and really, my dear," continued my wife, "I do not see why you should not do so. The money would be quite as safe in your hands as in the Bank of England, and you could allow her five per cent. for it, instead of the three she is now receiving. Why, the difference would allow us to keep a brougham."

At first sight my wife's suggestion seemed tempting enough, but the word "brougham" brought me to my senses, and I refused to accept the proposal. I positively declined to touch one shilling of the money on any condition whatever, and I stated my refusal in such strong terms, that my wife left the room in a towering passion.

Two days afterwards she laid before me another proposition. She said, as the incomes of the girls were quite sufficient to enable us to live comfortably, they could not see why I should continue toiling and slaving in a house of business. At my time of life I was entitled to take things more easily, and that both she and my daughters hoped that I would no longer continue as a drudge in a firm that after all cared very little about me. This second proposition I also refused to entertain. I was still in the prime of life; I had all my energies and my wits about me. I felt I should be miserable without occupation, and why should I throw away a hundred and fifty pounds a year? Besides, I was of a far too independent spirit to live upon the generosity of any one, even on that of my own daughters, and I requested my wife never to speak to me on the subject again. My family, I could easily perceive, were by no means pleased at my firmness, still I felt that I was right, and so I cared but little for their ill-temper.

Our acquaintances continued to increase in number, and among them there were one or two families who by no means pleased me. One of these was the family of a gentleman, a junior partner in a firm with which our house fre-

quently transacted business. They lived in considerable style, far more so in fact than their means warranted. I had not one word to say against the husband. He was a hard-working, good man of business; but his wife, who had a family of daughters, considered that the only means of finding suitable matches for them was by living in an expensive manner, and keeping a great deal of company, and I was fully persuaded that she was thereby spending every shilling her husband earned, if she was not even going beyond it. As I did not like such an example, I demurred to our forming any intimacy with them; but my wife held a contrary opinion, and she had her own way. The parties given by this family, in point of expense and splendour, greatly exceeded our own, and this fired my wife with the wish, if not to excel, at least to do things on an equally liberal scale. We determined, therefore, to give a party which should fully equal any of those we had attended at this house. Our acquaintances, however, were not yet upon a level with Mrs. Brown's (for by that name I will call the lady). Whilst ours continued solely among the middle class, the Misses Brown had many acquaintances among outsiders of the aristocracy, and several honourables, whose "honour," as Byron says, "came more before their names than after," were to be met at their parties. However, the Misses Brown were very good-natured girls, and on my daughters mentioning to them how much they regretted that their gentlemen acquaintances were not equal in point of position with those they met at their house, the latter unhesitatingly offered in the kindest manner to ask their mother to bring some of their stars with them to our next party. The proposition was joyfully accepted, and by way of doing these gentlemen sufficient honour, still further preparations were made for the very splendid party we were about to give. The evening at last came, and Mrs. Brown was true to her word. She brought with her three gentlemen, one an honourable, one a captain in a dragoon regiment, and the third, a Frenchman, Baron De Villebois. The last-mentioned gentleman was certainly the star of the evening. He was a tall, handsome, gentlemanly man, remarkably well-dressed, and he spoke English with great fluency. Although he would have had no difficulty in choosing any lady in the room for a partner, he confined his attentions principally to my elder daughter Margaret, with whom he frequently danced, while the captain paid great attention to the younger. Altogether, I must admit, our party was a very brilliant affair, although there were several things about it I did not quite approve of, but the pride I had in my girls, and their fine appearance, made me pass them over without any observation.

A few days after the party, the baron and the captain paid my wife and daughters a lengthened visit during my absence on business. They made themselves very agreeable, and evidently left a pleasing impression behind them. By some extraordinary series of chances, they were continually meeting them afterwards, and a considerable intimacy sprang up between them and my wife and daughters (for I began now to find that I was of little importance in my own house), which ended at last by the baron making an offer for Margaret's hand. When I heard of it, I confess I was far more surprised than pleased. I knew very little of him, and I refused to give my consent to

the match till he had given me some reference as to the respectability of his family. This he unhesitatingly promised to do, and I must say the description he gave was not an untruthful one, as I afterwards found on inquiry. His father, however, who he said was somewhat prejudiced on matters of religion, refused to give his consent to the match, as he did not like his son marrying a Protestant. The latter, however, persisted in his determination, and the father withdrew his objection, but refused to advance his son any money, as he had still some scruples about the alliance. This, however, appeared to my wife and daughters a matter of secondary importance, as I had ascertained that the old gentleman was a man of considerable fortune (even taking an English view of that matter), and that by the French law his son would, at any rate, inherit a very considerable portion of it, even if his father's objection should continue—a point I very much doubted after he had formed Margaret's acquaintance.

Altogether, I cannot say I ever liked the match, or the manner in which it was brought about, but I was helpless. My child, who was now her own mistress, was desperately in love with her future husband, while my wife was so dazzled with the idea of having a baron for a son-in-law, that she was blind to every other consideration. I endeavoured to impress upon them the necessity of Margaret's having at any rate a portion of her property settled upon herself, a proposition to which the girl indignantly refused to agree. "Everything she had in the world," she said, "should be his without the slightest reservation." And she kept her word.

I was told that the wedding of my daughter and the baron was a very brilliant affair; but to say the truth, although it took place in my house, I was so much distressed at the idea of losing my daughter, that I paid very little attention to what was passing around me. After the ceremony the bride and bridegroom returned to the house for the wedding breakfast, and they then started for France, where they intended to reside. It would be doing my wife a great injustice to say that she did not feel much at parting, but she soon recovered her spirits; the idea of her daughter now being a baroness greatly mitigated the pain she felt at their separation. We frequently heard from Margaret; she and her husband had taken apartments at Paris till such time as a reconciliation could be effected with the baron's father. In her letters she always expressed herself as living very happily with her husband; but I thought I perceived, after they had been married for some months, that these expressions did not seem altogether genuine. The idea pained me greatly, but I did not mention the subject to my wife. The latter now received a letter from Margaret, intimating the probability of her soon becoming a mother. This news gave me great satisfaction in more ways than one, and not the least was that I thought the birth of the child might act as a peace-maker in the baron's family.

Shortly after Margaret's departure, my younger daughter, Alice, received an offer of marriage from the captain, which she accepted. I did not like the match, and I argued as strongly against it as I could. My principal objection was, that the captain had now left the army, and had not obtained any other occupation, and I did not like the idea of seeing my daughter united to a

idle man." My wife, however, insisted that the match was a very genteel one, and that the captain's relatives were highly respectable, even aristocratical; all of which was certainly true, and she added that she had no doubt they would soon be able to obtain for him a government appointment. Finding my arguments of no avail, I offered no further opposition. I will also admit that I rather liked the captain, notwithstanding his faults. He was a very brave, good-natured fellow, could be active enough when he pleased, and had not the slightest particle of snobbishness about him. Had it not been for his utter recklessness, I should have accepted him willingly as my son-in-law. Again, I had more power in this case than I had in Margaret's. She was of age at the time of her wedding, and I had no control over her fortune, but Alice still wanted a year of being twenty-one, and so I refused to give my consent to the match unless five thousand pounds of her property were settled upon her, leaving the balance at her own disposal. I must do the captain the justice to say that he made no demur whatever to the stipulation, on the contrary, he expressed himself much pleased at my foresight. Alice and her husband determined to spend their honeymoon in Paris, where they could have the opportunity of frequently seeing Margaret. Before they left I requested, as a particular favour, that the captain should make what inquiries he could about the baron, as I much suspected that Margaret was not so happy as her letters tried to lead us to imagine. He promised to make every inquiry upon the subject, and faithfully to let me know the result.

When Alice and her husband returned to England, they took up their residence at our house, having no home of their own to go to. I questioned the captain as to the information he had been able to obtain about Margaret. He told me that she and her husband were living in a good deal of style, that she had expressed herself as perfectly happy and contented, but from the expression of her face, he believed that she was not altogether without anxiety.

"Fortunately," said the captain, "I picked up a fellow of the name of Jones, who is now living in Paris, and knows pretty well everybody, and I put him on to make inquiries about the baron for me, and to let me know the result. I have no doubt I shall have it in a few days, and then I will tell you all that he says without reservation."

About a week after his return, he received a letter from Paris one morning, which, without opening, he put into his pocket, saying that he would read it after breakfast. In the evening, as we were having our cigar together, suddenly the captain broke out with—

"Between ourselves, governor, I begin to suspect that the baron is, after all, little better than a scoundrel."

"Why so?" I remarked, greatly alarmed, for I had begun to entertain a somewhat similar opinion of him myself.

"Well, this morning I received old Jones's letter. He tells me he has found out a great deal about the baron, but nothing whatever to his credit; in fact, that he is one of the most profligate and notorious gamblers in Paris. He says, also, that he had just heard that he has lately lost a great deal of money, and that he is considered by everybody there as an utterly ruined man. I hope he has not got hold of any of Margaret's money."

This intelligence caused me the greatest alarm, and I determined the next morning to ascertain what had been done with Margaret's fortune. To my horror I found that the whole of the money had been withdrawn from the Bank of England and sent over to France. I now determined on writing to Margaret on the subject; but before I had finished my letter, we received one from her saying that her husband wished her to come over to England for her accouchement, so that she might be with her mother at the time, and that she expected to arrive at my house the next day. The letter caused us much surprise, but the pleasure we felt at the prospect of so soon seeing our child, considerably neutralized it. Margaret arrived late the next evening, greatly fatigued with her journey. After the first joy of meeting was over, I began to examine carefully the expression of my daughter's countenance, and I was much pained at the impression it conveyed to me. She was poorly clad, too, and had brought with her but very little luggage, and my wife found that no preparation whatever had been made for the expected infant.

One morning, shortly after her arrival, Margaret, during my absence, received a letter from the baron, which had such a violent effect upon her, that it caused a premature accouchement, and the child was dead. I inquired what was the nature of the letter, and the captain, who was certainly not overwhelmed at our misfortune, placed it in my hands, and then, folding his arms coolly, walked up and down the room smoking his cigar, while I read the letter. In it the baron said that he much regretted to inform Margaret that after he had taken good legal advice on the subject, he had come to the conclusion that their marriage was an informal one, inasmuch as he had not received the consent of his parents to the match. It gave him, he said, great pain; but his conscience at the same time told him that he had done wrong. Much as it grieved him, he had no alternative but to insist on their separation. He had not had the courage to inform her of it personally, and for that reason he had invented the excuse for her to visit England. He would now say adieu to her, and for ever; but that she might rest assured, though separated, he should always hold her in the highest esteem and affection.

The letter fell from my hands, and I threw myself on an easy chair, utterly overcome; the captain the while walking up and down the room with an air of most perfect indifference. At last I said to him—

"What can possibly be the scoundrel's meaning? Why, he knows perfectly well that he received a letter from his father, stating that although he would not be present at the wedding, or countenance it, still, as it seemed to be so essential for his son's happiness, he would withdraw all opposition to it."

"Have you got the letter?" said the captain, taking his cigar out of his mouth at the moment, and knocking the ashes into the fire-place.

"No, I have not," I said; "he kept it."

"It's a pity," said the captain, quietly replacing the cigar in his mouth.

"What would you advise me to do?" I said.

"Consult your lawyer," was the only answer he made me.

I resolved on following his advice, and early the next morning I left home for that purpose. On my return I found Margaret in extreme danger, and my wife and Alice in the greatest distress of mind. The captain was no

longer there. After breakfast he had packed up his carpet-bag, and left the house without saying where he was going, or even bidding adieu to his wife. A few hours afterwards, however, she received a hurried note stating that before leaving the house he had forgotten to mention that he should not be home for two or three days. I should possibly have been much surprised at his conduct, but my anxiety about Margaret's health shut out from my mind all other considerations. Even the villanous behaviour of the baron seemed to interest me but little, so great was the terror I was in. The day passed over, and when at night the doctor paid his visit, I waited with great anxiety for the report he would give of the patient.

The news I received from him was, on the whole, satisfactory. He said that he had found Margaret considerably better than she had been in the morning, and, although he could not pronounce her out of danger, still, with youth and a good constitution on her side, he had great expectations that all would end well. "Above all things," he said, "she must be kept quiet, and nothing allowed to excite or annoy her."

The doctor's directions were difficult indeed to carry out. Possibly we might be able to keep her quiet, but to keep her from anxiety was a different affair. As the acute symptoms of her case diminished, her distress of mind increased in proportion. By degrees the full extent of her calamity came before us, and I was puzzled how to act. My employers, with great kindness, gave me permission to remain away from business as long as I might consider it desirable. My lawyer advised that as soon as Margaret should be capable of travelling, I should take her, armed with all documentary evidence of her marriage, with me to France, and there apply to the law to establish her position as the baron's wife. I determined on following his advice; but how to carry it into effect I hardly knew. The greatest difficulty of all was, that I could not speak one word of the French language, although I could read it with tolerable facility. Here I had great reason to be discontented with the captain's behaviour. He spoke French fluently, and could have assisted me much; but although it was now nearly a week since he had left the house, we had not heard one word from him, and where to address a letter to him I knew not. Alice also began to be dreadfully alarmed at his silence, for though she knew him to be a bad correspondent, she did not believe him capable of so much cruelty as to neglect her and her family in the distress they were in.

Four days more passed over, and Alice received a letter from her husband. It was dated from a prison in France. In his letter the captain detailed his adventures since he left the house. He had determined, he said, that that rascal Villebois should not go without the reward of his villainy, and for that purpose he had left England to challenge him. On arriving in Paris, he found the baron was at his father's *château*, and he immediately started off to meet him. When he arrived at the village near which the *château* is situated, to his intense indignation he found that, to oblige his father, the baron had married a French lady of large fortune.

"All idea of challenging the baron," the captain continued, "immediately fled from my mind, and, instead of fighting a duel with him, I chose a thick heavy horsewhip, and, having waylaid him, I inflicted on him so fearful a

chastisement, that for some hours the villain's life was despaired of." The captain having performed, as he called it, "this great moral duty," was on the point of turning his steps homeward, when he was seized by the police, and thrown into a prison to await his trial for the murderous assault he had committed. In the letter, he begged his wife to come over to France immediately, and bring with her some money that he might be able to engage lawyers to defend him, and especially not to forget to pack up with her things some good cigars, as those provided by the authorities were not fit for "a dog to smoke."

Here was a new tribulation for us. Alice, of course, immediately left England to join her husband, taking with her a considerable sum of money as well as the much-desired cigars. I must say, although I was at first grievously annoyed at the captain's conduct, it increased my regard for him, as it showed, in spite of the blundering manner he had carried out his intentions, that he had been solely actuated by his love for my family. I may here state that he was sentenced to three months imprisonment, which he underwent, and then returned to England.

Margaret had now sufficiently recovered to leave England, and I started off with her to claim what in English legal phraseology is called "a restitution of conjugal rights." I had a letter of introduction to an *avocat* of eminence, who commenced proceedings on my daughter's account, and the baron commenced counter proceedings against her for illegally bearing his name. His cause came off first. Margaret was tried in the Imperial Court of Douay. It was then proved that no formal consent of the parents had been received to the match, the baron's father positively denying that he had ever written the letter withdrawing his opposition to the match, which had been shown me by the baron. The result was a verdict against Margaret, condemning her to a nominal fine of fifty francs, with a warning that, in case she should again be guilty of calling herself the baron's wife, she was certain to be imprisoned.

I had now no alternative but to take my poor child back to England with me, neither married nor unmarried; her wedding, according to the English law, being legal—according to the French, illegal. However, it mattered little either way. The shock had been too great for her to withstand, and she gradually sunk under it. She had no particular disease, but seemed simply to fade away, and before twelve months had expired, after the trial at Douay, I followed her to the grave.

With regard to the captain, he still continued the amiable, good-natured, idle fellow he was when I first knew him. As he would take to no occupation, and as his family yearly increased in number, the interest of the five thousand pounds settled on his wife was not sufficient to maintain them in England, so we gave up the house in Paddington, sold off the furniture, and my wife, the captain, and Alice, with their children, went over to France, where they are now residing in genteel poverty in a town on the Normandy coast. Alice has already five children, and is daily expecting another.

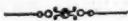
My own part in the family history is soon told. During the illness of poor Margaret, I had unfortunately learnt to seek consolation from the bottle, and after her death, I sought it more eagerly than before. After the

departure of my family for France, the habit increased to such an extent that I could not break myself of it. If I attempted to leave it off, the utter misery of my solitude was so great that I was obliged to take to it again. My employers, after frequently threatening me, at last dismissed me, and with good cause. I then went over to my family in France, and, with the exception of the captain, they seemed anything but delighted to see me; "my appearance," they said, "being so ungentlemanly." I left them, and returned again to England, where I have resided ever since. Occasionally I receive little commissions from my late employers, such as copying papers, or odd bits of accounting. I also keep the books of two or three petty tradesmen, and altogether I contrive to earn enough to keep me in meat and—drink; and so, I suppose, it will continue till the end of the chapter.

He had hardly concluded when I found the boat was upon the point of arriving at Blackwall, and I prepared to leave the cabin. Before doing so, I told him how much I regretted that a man possessed of so many natural good qualities should have become a victim to the filthy vice of drinking, and I concluded, as I warmly shook his hand, "I hope, when next we meet, I shall find you the same sober man that I knew you formerly."

He shook his head mournfully, but made no reply. I had good proof, however, that my advice was useless, for, as I ascended the cabin stairs, I heard him say,

"Steward, bring me a glass of rum, and let it be neat."



A RECOLLECTION.

WE loved two Poets in that happy time;
 And read together, sitting hand in hand,
 Where the rocks cast a shadow on the sand,
 And sunny waves made echo to the rhyme:
 Theocritus of Sicily—who sung
 Of many a dusky dryad-haunted grove,
 Of shepherds' sorrows and of maidens' love,
 In measures sweetest of the sweet Greek tongue;
 And Milton—whose blind spirit could conceive
 The Paradise no other mortals know,
 The grand primeval passion and the woe
 Of the first-born Adam and sweet Eve.
 And as we read, we marvelled Love could be
 So old, and yet so new to her and me!

M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.

BELLA'S EXCITING DAY.

THE first thing Bella saw this fine hot day was a crowd of people round the church door, watching the cabs as they drove up; and she thought this would be something to excite her mind, so she came up as fast as she could, and stood among the people looking. As she had been running, her hair was anyhow, and one of her boots nearly off her foot; indeed, she had to hitch up her old frock over her shoulder, just as the young ladies, all in white, began to step out of the cabs, and walk into the church one after the other. They wore long white veils; they had no bonnets on; and their hair shone like jewels in the warm sun.

Bella was very much surprised, and said to a policeman, who was so tall that she had to look up at him as if he was a monument, and so stiff that he could hardly see below his own chin—

"If you please, sir, what is this?"

Now the policeman took no notice of Bella, but he called out to a boy who was up the lamp-post—

"Hi, you sir, come down!"

Then Bella determined to ask the little boy, who had no doubt seen inside the church-window, and so she said—

"Are they all going to be married?"

"Married! no!" said the rude boy. "it's a confummation. They're all going to be confirmed."

This was a great mystery to Bella; so she rubbed her nose with her old stuff frock, and felt much interested. In a short time, she heard the singing and the music, very loud and nice. Then the very pavement seemed to shake under her feet, and she had a pricking sensation at the roots of her hair, and something in her throat as if she was going to cry.

"There!" said the little boy, nudging her: "that's the confummation. They're a-being done now; it's a bishop as does it; I see him go in at the other door."

This made Bella feel sad.

"I never saw a bishop," said she, very humbly. But she made a solemn resolution in her own mind that she would be confirmed, with music, and singing, and a white veil. Only she had not considered how expensive it is to ride in a cab, poor child; half-a-crown, perhaps; and she had never had half-a-crown in her hand in all her life. However, she said in her own mind, "I *will* be confirmed when I am older;" and she stamped with one foot on the pavement as she had the thought.

It was a good long time before there was any more conversation; however, at last the little boy spoke again, and said—

"They haves a bun and a glass o' wynd apiece."

Then the organ burst out again, and the little boy gave her a violent push, he was so excited.

"There!" says he, "don't you hear? They're eatin' their buns now, while the organ plays 'Glory be to the Father!'"

At this, Bella was quite overcome, and leaned with one hand on the little boy's shoulder. So he came closer, and put his great red paw round Bella's downy thin arm, and spoke more softly, saying—

"I say, don't you cry, silly! I'm going to be confirmed some day—and I'll take you with me!"

Now, indeed, Bella felt as if she had something to look forward to in life, and she asked the little boy what his name was.

"Name?" says he, "Bos-eye."

"That's not your real name," said Bella.

"No; they calls me Bos-eye in our Buildin's, because I can squint double—jest look here!"

"Oh, don't you!" cried Bella, and hid her face in her frock, as the little boy squinted horribly;—they might well call him Bos-eye.

"Shall you be confirmed in a white veil?" inquired Bella, doubtfully.

"No—oh!" said the boy, very loud. "White veil? no—oh. I shall have a shirt-pin, and a new hat, and we'll have a——"

"Now then, move on, move on!" said the stiff policeman, and all the cabs came rattling up to the church again, and the people rode away, and a stout man came and stood at the door of the church, in a great coat all over broad gilt lace, and he had a cocked hat, all over gilt lace too, and he carried a tall stick, with a real silver knob to it.

Then Bella trembled very much, and stood very close to the little boy, and laid hold of the lapel of his jacket, and said—

"Oh, what a beautiful bishop!"

"Bishop! ha, ha, ha!" said the little boy; "he's only a beadle; he belongs to the workus; bishop! ha, ha! Come along, little 'un! why, none of the girls is pretty, not nigh so pretty as *you* are; and look how they're dressed up, and how they greases their hair!"

Just then, an omnibus came by with a good many gentlemen on the outside, very smartly dressed.

"Oh, here's a lot o' Swells!" cried the little boy, very much delighted; and, when one of the gentlemen happened to smile at him, he ran at the side of the omnibus, and began turning over and over sideways on his hands, head down, head up, so that his hair went flying, and you could see all the rents in his trousers: just like a wheel he looked, turning and turning like mad. At last one of the gentlemen threw him a penny, and away he ran. He never came back to Bella. This caused a void in her bosom, and she went wandering down the long broad street in search of Excitement, though she did not know the name of the thing she was in search of.

The next remarkable place she came to was a shop called a *Restaurant*. Inside were all manner of nice things to eat and drink, with china plates, and silver forks, and flowers, and waiters, and waitresses. And ladies and gentlemen were sitting at little marble tables taking Refreshments, and as Bella looked at the gentlemen, she thought of Bos-eye, and remembering the appearance of the gentlemen she had seen upon the top of the omnibus, she said to herself, "These also are Swells." And the Swells were eating pleasant

meats and green salads, which made Bella feel as if she could go and find out a field and lie down and bite the grass. But of all the things she saw in this place nothing pleased her so much as the ices. For Bella had had a Penny Ice one day, and knew an ice when she saw one. All girls are fond of ices, and especially pink ices, such as these ladies were eating, and Bella stood looking in at the door, with very large eyes and her mouth wide open. That was quite rude of her, but she did not know any better, and when at last one of the waiters came to the door and *bisbed* at her, with a white napkin, as if she was a puppy-dog, she went away, ashamed and miserable and angry.

The sun was very hot indeed, and the streets dry and dusty, and Bella looked about in vain for Bos-eye, and then stood up against a post feeling her skin dry and her mouth dry, and all over dry, and quite uncomfortable and low. Just as she was in this unhappy frame of mind, there came by a watering-cart, and, oh, how refreshing it looked in the eyes of our Bella! The bright, glittering jets of water made rainbows in the sun, and a longing, longing thought came over Bella which she could not resist. So she rushed up to the back of the cart, and laid hold of the water pipe with both hands, and ducked up and down, and let the jets of water play over her again and again till she was wet through nearly. "Oh, how nice and cool!" thought Bella; and so it was, only she looked like a drowned rat. This made a gentleman laugh so that he gave her a threepenny piece, though why a gentleman should give a street-girl a piece of silver because she looked like a drowned rat, I cannot tell. And the gentleman walked off laughing. Bella heard him say to another gentleman, "By Jove! it's as good as a play!" and perhaps if it was it was worth threepence to him. But all dry people do not like wet people, and Bella had not gone many yards along the hot pavement before she heard a lady, who was walking with another lady, say, in a fretful tone of voice, "That wet girl is a nuisance." Now Bella did not know the meaning of the word nuisance; but, looking behind, she saw that she had made the pavement wet all the way as she came along. So she concluded that life was very difficult, seeing one person called her as good as a play and gave her a silver threepenny piece for being dripping wet, while another said she was a nuisance. These things made Bella somewhat melancholy, and she thought to herself—

"When I am confirmed I shall understand things, perhaps."

Then, for a moment, she seemed to hear the loud rolling organ, and the sweet voices of the singers, and she felt better, though she wished Bos-eye was with her to tell her how to spend her money, and to share what she bought with it.

Just at that moment, a costermonger came by, wheeling a broad barrowful of fruit, and looking at Bella, as if he knew she was a capitalist; and he made a noise, saying—

"Yah—yaw—yah—yee—hee—yigh—yo—yo—o—oh!"

"Bella went up to the man's barrow, and shaking back her hair and pointing with her finger, said—

"What's this a piece?"

"That's pineapple, miss," said the costermonger; "West-Injy pine; a penny a slice."

"And what's the cherries?" asked little Bella.

"Cherries, my dear," says the costermonger, "a penny a bunch; them in the bags twopence."

Now, what Bella wanted in her very heart to do was to buy a slice of pine for a penny, and a bunch of cherries for a penny, because this was a variety, and the slice of pine looked solid, like bread and butter; but, unfortunately, just at that very moment, she caught the eye of a lady fixed upon her, and thought to herself—

"It will be more genteel if I buy a bag of cherries."

There was no time for thought, for the costermonger gave his barrow a push, and cried out once more—

"Yah—yaw—yah—yee—hee—yigh—yo—yo—o—oh!"

So Bella bought a bag of cherries for twopence, and had only one penny left of her silver piece.

The first thing she did, you may be quite sure, was to begin upon her cherries, and very nice they were, and very great was her joy in their niceness. Did you ever think how completely happy young children are while they are eating pleasant things? But in the midst of her joy, she had an unpleasant feeling, which it is not easy for me to describe. You must consider that she had heard the organ, and made a friend, and parted from a friend, and had a shower-bath, and been tipped with silver, and been called a nuisance, and that, after all, she was a human being, just like you and me. Now, what was it she felt? She felt a sort of vacancy, and a sort of vexation with herself; as if she wanted to go to sleep and forget something. I do not understand these things myself, but I know a gentleman who is a Moralist, and wears spectacles, and always reads at breakfast; and he says Bella had lost some of her Self-respect by buying cherries in a bag, in order to be genteel, when what she wanted in her inmost bosom was a slice of West-Indian pine, and a *bunch* of cherries for variety.

I wish I understood Morality, and Manners, and Society, and things of that sort, and then I should know how much blame to lay on the shoulders of the lady who, a few minutes before, had called Bella a nuisance; for, though Bella did not know what a Nuisance was, she felt as much lowered as if she had been called an Abracadabra or a Parallelopipedon; and which is the worst of the three, goodness only knows.

At the time at which these exciting events were happening to our Bella, there was a place in our city called Leicester Square. In the middle of this square was a statue that looked as if by tipsy and reckless habits it had become poor and shabby; and all round was rough, straggling grass, with a very few trees, that looked as shabby as the statue. But when rain fell, the trees and the grass smelt sweetly, as trees and grass always do, and I have with my own eyes watched a sparrow pecking at the grass-seed in that very square. Owing to causes which I cannot explain, not being Chief Commissioner of Works, or a Bishop, or a Policeman, or anything of that

sort, there are places round this square at which the railings have been broken, so that the children can creep in. As the railings are of solid iron, I do not believe the children themselves can have broken them, but I do know that I have seen them, three or four at a time, creep in at a hole, head foremost, exhibiting their little brown dusty thighs, and showing, by their looks, that they felt guilty and insecure in what they were doing. One of the children that strolled up and went in this day was our Bella.

The moment our Bella got inside, with the little bag of cherries in her hand, she regretted the step she had taken; for there were about as many children in the square as there were cherries in her bag, and they all left off play to look at her, as if they would like to eat her up, poor thing. There was one little boy of whom special mention must be made. He was older than Bella, and she considered that he was gorgeously dressed, and of such genteel manners, that if he had been a man she would have said to herself, "And here, also, is a Swell!"

Bella had not been many moments in the square when this young gentleman walked up to her and commenced a conversation by asking if she liked playing among the haycocks.

"Are they good to eat?" said Bella.

"No—oh!" answered the young gentleman, in a very impolite manner—"aint you ever been in the country?"

"No," said poor little Bella, blushing much. Indeed, she felt so humbled, again, she hardly knew what to do. The little boy she was conversing with was well-dressed, and she was shabby; he knew what a haycock was, and she did not; he looked down upon her, and was rude to her; and there was only one thing in which she was able to stand against him. Now, what was that? The little boy was no more a Moralist, or a Poet, or a Philosopher, than I am, and I will bet anything he could not even spell *Æsthetics*; so he had no idea that there were depths in Bella's child-woman's eyes that there were not in his, or anything beautiful in her round smooth brow more than in his square, rough, selfish forehead. But Bella had the cherries. And when the boy was rude to her, she turned red in the face, and had a little agony all to herself (oh, what fine words are here; but things are finer than words, I assure you!) and offered the cherries to the well-dressed boy, and they sat down under a tree, and ate them together. When they had eaten them all, they turned over the cherry-stones in their mouths, and Bella went fast asleep on the dry, half-yellow grass.

A long sleep she had, and a long dream, which I may some day give an account of; but when she woke it was quite night! All the other children had gone home to bed; and around her were the gas-lamps of the pavement and the shops, and the noisy people making a sound like thunder with their tongues and their feet, as Bella woke lonely and cold in the square. At first, Bella forgot that the cherries had all been eaten, and felt for them at her side—but there was only the bag, and that was burst; for the greedy little gentleman had blown it out with his mouth, and popped it.

Now, it seemed to Bella that the people were all hurrying one way, and

she heard them crying, "Fire, Fire!" So she thought to herself, "I *should* like to see a fire!" and up she got, and scrambled round the square, till she found the hole she had got in by, and so out into the street, when she followed the crowd. And a long way she went, I can tell you, up one street and down another, and still the sky was red in front of her, and still it got redder and redder, and the crowd grew thicker and thicker. At last she began to see smoke rising up from the fire, and the weathercock of a church-steeple as bright as gold and brighter, and the people kept on guessing what place it was that was burning.

"It's a coach-maker's!" said one.

"It's a hoil-cloth factory!" said another.

"I smell the hoil!" said a third.

"And I smells the turps!" said a fourth, as the crowd was becoming so thick that poor little Bella was almost afraid of being knocked down by the fellows; they *do* push so.

But a severe disappointment awaited her. The crowd was so great that she could not, after all, get near enough to see the fire: the mob was as long as a whole street of people, and she was not much higher than my knee. What was the consequence? She felt the heat; and saw the sparks flying overhead; she caught a glimpse, once or twice, of a jet of water as it flew, and of the curl of steam in which it was thrown back from the burning rafters; and once, only once, she heard a crash, and then, while the flames shot up so high that she could see *real fire*—think of that!—she heard a great groan, a long "A-a-h!"—in fact a sound I cannot print—from the thousands of men and women that were there. Then the crowd swayed backwards and forwards, and Bella said, "Oh, *please* don't scrouge!" and she felt, at the roots of her hair, almost as she had felt in the morning at the church door, when she heard the organ blow, and the children sing.

Now I have consulted a Critic, *who writes in the papers*, and he tells me that according to the Laws of Art, I must not describe the fire, because Bella did not see it. The thing she really did see was a fire-engine, but everybody knows what a fire-engine is like—it is just as if the thing that makes a train go had got loose at a railway-station, and run wild in the street, with men to ride it as if it was a horse. Oh, how it came tearing along!

"Ah-ah-ah!" cried the crowd, and cheered the firemen, and made way for the engine, and some of them said—

"It's the Prince of Wales—hoo-ray!"

"Hoo-ray!" said Bella.

If there was one excitement which Bella desired more than another, it was to behold the Prince of Wales, and the Princess of Wales, to whom she was particularly partial, having seen their picture, arm-in-arm, going to be married, presented gratis to the subscribers to the *Young Ladies' Companion*, which was regularly taken in by the girl at the beer-shop Bella knew best. It is so hard to know what people do see, and what they do not see, that I will not declare whether Bella did or did not set eyes on the Prince, supposing him to have been on that fire-engine—why should we want to be sure of everything, like bankers—and lawyers—and our clergyman? But, before retiring to rest

for the night, Bella stated that she had seen the Prince and Princess of Wales on a fire-engine. When I mentioned this to a friend who is a Philosopher, he said it was a myth; though our clergyman maintained it was a story, only he didn't say story exactly. Now, when I told these things to my little daughter, she smiled with all her huge antelope brown eyes, and, lifting her hand to let it fall with a droop of apology, said—

"But, oh, papa, she had had such an Exciting Day!"

MATTHEW BROWNE.

ÉTRETAT IN THE BATHING SEASON.*

NORMANDY the beautiful has once more assumed all its summer glory. The air is one bright burst of sunshine. The tree-capped hills freshen the jaded eye with their intense greenness, while everywhere across the happy valleys stretch the golden yellow fields of colza, plenteously interspersed with poppies of profoundest crimson. In deep wind-swept patches the wheat waves its yellowing ears. Nested in the invariable square of tall trees, each farm or homestead sends into the air its pleasant scents and sounds; nay, every village is embowered in foliage, and its presence would be unguessed of by the passing traveller save for the glittering spire that towers above the greenery, and points to heaven—Faith's finger pointing up to God, as some modern rhymester ingeniously expresses it. The absence of hedges—those delicious essentials to English landscape—is not long felt by the English visitor, who soon becomes accustomed to the fine though brilliant contrasts of colours to be found in Norman landscape. As I ride over the steep hills from Fécamp, after inspiriting myself with a little sip of the fine liqueur made by the monks of the Benedictine Abbey, the road affords constantly changing pleasures: now a long avenue of cool shade, with tall fir-trees on either side, and the sunshine drawing white webs through their topmost branches; again, a shining expanse of gold and red, with the quivering light pouring down on coleworts and poppies; and not seldom, a little village, with old women and maidens plying their ancient spinning-wheels in the shade of cottage doors, and blue-bloused loungers puffing their halfpenny cigars on the wooden forms outside the auberge. There are a few pedestrians on the road, and many old-fashioned vehicles. Now and then, a pretty girl, seated on a donkey, with a cumbrous wooden frame to support her shapely lower limbs, jogs by in holiday gear, fresh fruits and vegetables ranged around her, speedily to be disposed of in the market-place of Fécamp. From sun to shadow, from shadow to sun, I pass at leisure, until I gain the point where the highway curves round the shoulder of a great hill; and *then*, what a prospect opens itself before me! To my left hand stretches the fertile hollow of the Grand Val,—fields golden and red, deep-green clumps of woodland, quiet homesteads

* See *Argosy*, vol. i., pp. 165, 315.

bosomed in their trees, and, running through the midst of all, the straight white line of dusty highway. The hills beyond, covered with soft moss-like grass and underwood of many hues, lie clear and distinct against a sky flecked with feathery cirrus. Before me, at the mouth of the Grand Val, lies Étretat—a mass of fishermen's cottages, old buildings, and modern chalets, glittering cheerily in the sunlight, save where it is overshadowed by the great cliffs that rise to north and to south, and touched by the very lips of the sea. Yonder, diminished by distance to a small aperture, is the huge Porte d'Aval; and yonder, on the other side, on the brow of the cliffs, stands the solitary chapel of Our Lady of Safety. The sea is green and calm as glass, and a boat with furled red sails slowly makes its way, with a motion of oars, to the point where village and water meet. There seems no stir of life anywhere. All is still and beautiful. But while I pause to gaze, there is a jingle of bells behind me, and the diligence goes rattling down the hill in a cloud of dust. I follow at leisure.

It needs no sorcerer to guess that Étretat is no longer the charming solitude wherein I was so happy last winter. As I enter the principal street I pass several pedestrians attired after the last Parisian mode—more than one elegant carriage occupied by wealth and millinery. Shops which were hermetically sealed during the winter are thrown open for the display of all the thousand unnecessaries that flesh delights in. The tradesmen stand in their doorsteps, watching the diligence as it rattles by, and noting new arrivals. The young man at the telegraph office lounges in the threshold, looking radiant as the day. A pet poodle with a silken collar yelps at the diligence. Prettily adorned heads are popped out of first-floor windows. The words "Table d'hôte" are written up at every corner. In a word, the gay season has commenced. The dry boats are again wheeled down to the water; the flocks delight not in fold, nor the shepherd by the fire; Venus Cytherea leads the promenade under the burning sun; while the Parisian nymphs, linked with the Graces, holding the hands of the bathing-men, lie on their backs in the water and pop up alternate feet!

There is no lack of friendly faces to welcome me as I join the crowd in front of the hôtel, where the diligence has just halted. Madame the hostess, shiningly bedight, drops a pretty curtsy and recognises me with a winning smile. Butcher and baker doff hats politely. The fat *chef* gives an oily bow. Only one fellow seems surly, and that is a bloated ostler, whose face brings up an unpleasant recollection. For when, in winter time, I abode here, it was my necessity to purchase meat from a savage butcher given to drinking—a horrible *sans culotte* ruffian, whose hand quivered like an aspen leaf as it handled chopper or cleaver, and who cut you a mutton chop as if he would better enjoy the job of cutting your head off. This amiable person drank on an average about six bottles of cognac daily, and was in every way the terror of his poor little wife—a sweet and delicate creature much younger than himself, who bore him two pretty children. Slowly but surely the little woman began to pine and sicken: her life was one of almost mortal terror, brightened by no gleam of domestic cheer—for the very little ones dared scarcely breathe in the presence of their father. On the day of the Feast of

Kings, when the children make merry with masks and coloured lanterns, there was a gathering at the board of my landlord, the captain; and among the happy faces there, I noticed those of the butcher's two children. Their mother brought them, and became quite merry with her relations. The Brute was off on some distant expedition. The happy afternoon passed. Hastening home with her children, the little woman found her husband lying in the shop stupified with drink. What else happened, I know not; but three days after the woman was a corpse. She was choked by a long-standing ulcer in the throat, and her danger was unperceived until all hope was over. Entering one morning, a neighbour found the children crying, the wife stretched dead on her bed, and the husband lying delirious on the floor. They tried to rouse the man—they led him to the bedside—they showed him the pretty dead face; but he only glared and shivered, and called for drink. As the light dawned on him, he crept away into the dark like a dog. More cognac strengthened him, and his drunken frenzy soon made doubly hideous that house of horror.

It is this very fellow's face, then, which looks so surly on me in front of the hôtel. From a thriving tradesman, the Brute has dropped into a sullen, sodden hanger-on of the stables; and in his eyes there is less speculation than ever, and the imbecile glare of normal intoxication is rapidly deepening over his features. With a shudder I make my way into the hotel, and speedily find a vacant corner at the *table d'hôte*, which is just commencing. The gathering is not large, but select,—fantastic costumes predominating. There are no English present; to them Étretat is yet *terra incognita*. But there are visible an eccentric lady with a little bull-dog in her lap, two or three pretty girls, a chatty married lady, some commercial travellers, a languid youth of the genus swell, and a French man of letters. It is on this last individual that I concentrate my attention. He has passed the sunny side of life; his flowing locks are grey; but his smile is juvenile, his dress gay, his jewellery fantastic. His name is Eugene de — something or other, and he has written two or three romances—a tale of Bohemia, a tale of the demi-monde, a tale of a wicked married lady with the faintest hint of a moustache. He is a charming child of nature. He whispers prettily wicked things—O so innocently—to the married lady at his side. He tells little anecdotes about Paris, with a dark hint here and there about a terrible love-drama in which he himself has been a principal performer. He would be very *spirituel* if he would eat less. I am lost in wonder at the number of little dishes that he manages to empty, with his napkin tucked under his chin like a bib, and his little white fingers darting here and there at their own sweet will upon fresh prey.

It is growing dusk when I sally forth. The natives throng the streets, but are very quiet and subdued: the greater light of Paris awes and humbles them. Winding my way through the narrow streets, I speedily gain the embankment immediately above the beach. All is changed here. Gay promenaders chatter everywhere. The sailors and fishermen cluster round the old-fashioned boat-houses; but they exhibit a stiller and a hungrier air. Pretty *bonnes* trip among the cordage, guiding odiously well-dressed chil-

dren. But what gingerbread edifice is this obtruding its wooded tawdriness just above high-water mark? It is the *Casino*. Transported mysteriously away, like Aladdin's palace, at the end of every autumn, it reappears mysteriously at the beginning of every summer. It contains, besides the dancing-chamber, a very excellent reading-room and library, and a commodious billiard-room. In front of it is a parade, overlooking the sea, with seats for the weary and swings for the agile. Situated here, among the simple cottages and boat-houses of the fishermen, and between the two towering precipices of the Porte d'Aval and the Coté du Mont, the Casino seems singularly out of place. The natives, indeed, regard it as an innovation; and the very sea, wrought to frenzy by the contemplation of such flippancy and flimsiness, has attempted to demolish it more than once. Nevertheless, a stroll on the parade in the deepening twilight is by no means disagreeable. It is something to see such pretty faces and such bewitching female costume as throng here at present. I have not seen an ugly lady since I entered the village. The amusements at the Casino to-night are very harmless. Some languid young men are playing at billiards. One active young man is having a swing. A few gentlemen, with their wives and daughters, are seated in the reading-room, and one stout old fellow, seated in the midst of a small group, is reading aloud, translating as he proceeds, from the English papers. There are two cases of flirtation on the parade, where, by the way, the great Eugene stands puffing his cigar, gazing seaward with a patronizing smile, and taking creation generally under his protection.

When, after a brief interval of deep twilight, the moon arises over the water, the scene is filled with a strange beauty. Far above one, in clear outline against the sky, stands the little chapel on the mount, and underneath it the tall chalk cliffs gleam by fits in the moonlight. It is low tide now, and lanterns gleaming down yonder on the strand show that the women are busy at the fountain. Beyond them is the Porte d'Aval, with its vast cathedral-like surroundings, and its dark base of rocks and seaweed. Only the low sound of footsteps, and the faint wash of the sea breaks the stillness; till hark! the bells of Nôtre Dame, sounding sweetly inland, call the faithful to prayers. I speculate what kind of an effect surroundings like these have upon the fashionable promenaders around me,—transported hither, with the Casino, like a bit of Paris carried bodily and by magic to the brink of the sea. Here are to be found few of those distractions so abundant in the capital. Here are only the moonlight and the still sea. I fear many of the Parisians think at heart that Étretat is very dull; but it is fashionable, and that goes a very long way in its favour.

Soon after the moon has arisen, the group of promenaders greatly increases; for a sound as of twanging fiddles is heard from the Casino. The chief hall is brilliantly lighted up. A small fiddle-band, conducted by a bland gentleman in white kid gloves, occupies the central dais, and forms and chairs are ranged irregularly around. Now begins the formation of a very pretty picture. While the band dashes gaily into the performance of Offenbach's last *morceau*, in troop ladies, gentlemen, and children, arranging themselves in little family groups all over the hall. The ladies, attired in the most provoking negligence,

fascinatingly and studiously careless, occupy themselves in sewing, knitting, and weaving fancy-work; nay, one determined matron is actually adorning what looks very like her husband's nightcap. The amusement to-night is an instrumental concert; and as the music selected is excellent, and the execution by no means bad, the effect is very charming. You can, if you please, seat yourself, as I am doing, just outside in the moonlight, and contemplate the sea, and listen all the while to the melody of the band. Fix your eyes on the *Porte d'Aval*, where the white sheen glimmers, forget the gay folly in your neighbourhood, and hearken to a soothing murmur that was once a sweet trouble within Mendelssohn's brain. What can be more delicious!—the music, the moonlight, and the soft undertone of the breaking tide, whose faint phosphorescent foam-line is glimmering yonder! Very pleasant it is, also when the band is playing from Gounod, to gaze into the hall, surveying the pretty faces bent over their fancy-work. There is a grace of purity about most of these French women; they have the sweetly confident air of innocence. They display none of the bad taste and awkward vanity so conspicuous in English watering-places. The very children behave themselves like little gentlemen and ladies.

As I betake myself to slumber, the music still lingers in mine ears, and seems the distant murmur of the subterranean river, on whose sunless banks, splashed with salt from the high tides, the Roman city lies in ruins. I arise betimes, and find the morning sunshine streaming golden over the shore, and the shadows of the cliffs falling long and cool into the glittering sea. The beach is gay and busy. All around the little cluster of bathing-boxes lying just under the parade, the visitors are grouping themselves to watch the bathers. The tide is well in, and the fun has commenced. Zephyr the bathing-man paddles a boat, to which is fastened a flight of wooden steps for bathers to rest upon, to and fro at a distance of a few yards from the shore; while the younger Zephyr plunges clad into the water, assisting the confident and encouraging the timid. Two tender creatures float on their backs close to his boat; and yonder, two or three hundred feet from the beach, three pretty faces float hither and thither, rosy with the kisses of the amorous waves. Mark that troop of ocean-sylphs tripping down over the shingle. Large light cloaks conceal their fair forms; but as they reach the edge of the sea, they fling their cloaks away, and appear attired in fantastically ornamented jackets and loose pantaloons. Then, with a ringing laugh, into the sea they plunge, scattering the bright water around them, and swim seaward, brightening the water as they go like a troop of Nereides. Maidens of the brine, they put to shame yonder shivering fellow, who crawls in water knee-deep and shivers through every limb. The sun strikes on their faces, glorifying the golden hair of the beauty who takes the lead. They are quite at home in the water. It is an odious comparison, but they swim as finely as frogs, playing all kinds of antics as they speed along. Yonder is an angel rolling over and over like a porpoise. See, now, they all join hands, and float silently side by side upon the water; till, with a silvery burst of laughter, they dash the foam from their faces, and swim onward. O to have an hour's marine flirtation with that golden-haired child of Thetis! That flirtations do take place under

such circumstances, I have heard on the best authority. It is reported that one young gentleman, who swam indifferently, followed out into the sea a young lady, who swam excellently; that, panting with emotion and exertion, he assured her in the briefest possible manner of his attachment, and almost choked himself in the attempt to seize and kiss her hand; that, floating upon his back, he explained quietly his position and circumstances, and breathed words of tenderness, while the fair one again and again plunged under water to conceal her blushes; and that, finally, when they swam to shore, [the daring youth had been accepted, at the cost of being almost paralyzed with cold.

Yonder is a party bathing *en famille*, after the manner of Leech's sketch. Papa very fat and merry, mamma fat and clumsy, and the younger branches divided into two sections—the frisky and the fearful. It is great fun when mamma drops down in a sitting posture, and kicks and cries in a dreadful effort to regain her legs. But whom have we here? A tall, stately figure, wrapt into a theatrical-looking cloak, stalks from a bathing box, and strides seaward. It is the great Eugene. A confident smile brightens his features; his breast is filled with manly daring. He gazes patronizingly on the sea—nay, pityingly, as on an easily vanquished antagonist. He is Byron in imagination, and about to cross the Hellespont. He flings off his cloak with the air of a gladiator. He steps into the water. The smile begins to fade from his features. Another step, and yet another. A wave breaks upon him; he shrieks, and tumbles shuddering into the arms of young Zephyr. A rapid conversation ensues. Zephyr seizes the hero's hand, and points seaward, but is resisted with wild gesticulations. Zephyr is firm, however. He drags his prey breast-deep, and then, by an ingenious movement, topples him over headlong. For a moment nothing is visible but the heroic legs; then the face emerges, but ah! how changed. Horror and agony are depicted on every lineament. Gasping, panting, spluttering, stumbling, Eugene makes for the shore, and pausing where the water is knee-deep, lies shiveringly down; and there he securely disports himself for some minutes. When he emerges, dripping like a sea-god, the air of confidence is his again, and he stalks up the shingle with the air of an ancient athlete.

With the morning bath the business of the day finishes, and visitors have little to do until evening, save to visit the places of interest around, or amuse themselves in the bosoms of their homes. Yet the life seems very pleasant. There is so much in nature that is beautiful, so much in the manners and customs of the natives that is interesting. For my own part, I have made up my mind to pause here for a time and enjoy myself, quite persuaded that there is no more delicious summer residence in France or England. It is time that other English people followed my example; and I hope that what I have written may induce them to do so. They will soon conquer the prejudice that the French style of bathing is indecent. After a few weeks here, they will be virtuously horrified when walking, at the bathing hour, on the beach of Margate or Ramsgate.

JOHN BANKS.

GRIFFITH GAUNT.

BY CHARLES READE.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

SHE recoiled with a violent shudder at first; and hid her face with one hand. Then she gradually stole a horror-stricken side glance.

She had not looked at it a moment when she uttered a loud cry, and pointed at its feet with quivering hand.

"THE SHOES! THE SHOES!—IT IS NOT MY GRIFFITH."

With this she fell into violent hysterics, and was carried out of the room at Houseman's earnest entreaty.

As soon as she was gone, Mr. Houseman, being freed from his fear that his client would commit herself irretrievably, recovered a show of composure, and his wits went keenly to work.

"On behalf of the accused," said he, "I admit the suicide of some person unknown, wearing heavy hobnailed shoes; probably one of the lower order of people."

This adroit remark produced some little effect, notwithstanding the strong feeling against the accused.

The coroner inquired if there were any bodily marks by which the remains could be identified.

"My master had a long black mole on his forehead," suggested Caroline Ryder.

"Tis here!" cried a juryman, bending over the remains.

And now they all gathered in great excitement round the corpus delicti; and there, sure enough, was a long black mole.

Then was there a buzz of pity for Griffith Gaunt, followed by a stern murmur of execration.

"Gentlemen," said the coroner solemnly, "behold in this the finger of Heaven. The poor gentleman may well have put off his boots, since, it seems, he left his horse; but he could not take from his forehead his natal sign; and that, by God's will, hath strangely escaped mutilation; and revealed a most foul deed. We must now do our duty, gentlemen, without respect of persons."

A warrant was then issued for the apprehension of Thomas Leicester. And, that same night, Mrs. Gaunt left Hershaw in her own chariot between two constables, and escorted by armed yeomen.

Her proud head was bowed almost to her knees, and her streaming eyes hidden in her lovely hands. For why? A mob accompanied her for miles, shouting, "Murderess!—Bloody Papist!—Hast done to death the kindest gentleman in Cumberland. We'll all come to see thee hanged.—Fair face but foul heart!"—and groaning, hissing, and cursing, and indeed only kept from violence by the escort.

And so they took that poor proud lady and lodged her in Carlisle gaol. She was enceinte into the bargain. By the man she was to be hanged for murdering.

CHAPTER XL.

THE county was against her, with some few exceptions. Sir George Neville and Mr. Houseman stood stoutly by her.

Sir George's influence and money obtained her certain comforts in gaol; and, in that day, the law of England was so far respected in a gaol, that untried prisoners were not thrown into cells, nor impeded, as they now are, in preparing their defence.

Her two staunch friends visited her every day, and tried to keep her heart up.

But they could not do it. She was in a state of dejection bordering upon lethargy.

"If he is dead," said she, "what matters it? If, by God's mercy, he is alive still, he will not let me die for want of a word from him. Impatience hath been my bane. Now, I say, God's will be done. I am weary of the world."

Houseman tried every argument to rouse her out of this desperate frame of mind; but in vain.

It ran its course, and then, behold, it passed away like a cloud, and there came a keen desire to live and defeat her accusers.

She made Houseman write out all the evidence against her; and she studied it by day, and thought of it by night; and often surprised both her friends by the acuteness of her remarks.

Mr. Atkins discontinued his advertisements; it was Houseman, who now filled every paper with notices informing Griffith Gaunt of his accession to fortune, and entreating him for that, and other weighty reasons, to communicate in confidence with his old friend John Houseman, attorney at law.

Houseman was too wary to invite him to appear and save his wife; for, in that case, he feared the Crown would use his advertisements as evidence at the trial, should Griffith not appear.

The fact is Houseman relied more upon certain lacunæ in the evidence, and the absence of all marks of violence, than upon any hope that Griffith might be alive.

The assizes drew near, and no fresh light broke in upon this mysterious case.

Mrs. Gaunt lay in her bed at night, and thought and thought.

Now the female understanding has sometimes remarkable power under such circumstances. By degrees Truth flashes across it, like lightning in the dark.

After many such nightly meditations, Mrs. Gaunt sent one day for Sir George Neville and Mr. Houseman, and addressed them as follows:—"I believe he is alive, and that I can guess where he is at this moment."

Both the gentlemen started, and looked amazed.

"Yes, sirs; so sure as we sit here, he is now at a little inn in Lancashire, called the 'Packhorse,' with a woman he calls his wife." And, with this, her face was scarlet, and her eyes flashed their old fire.

She exacted a solemn promise of secrecy from them, and then she told them all she had learned from Thomas Leicester.

"And so now," said she, "I believe you can save my life, if you think it is worth saving." And with this, she began to cry bitterly.

But Houseman, the practical, had no patience with the pangs of love betrayed, and jealousy, and such small deer, in a client whose life was at stake.

"Great Heaven! madam," said he, roughly: "why did you not tell me this before?"

"Because I am not a man—to go and tell everything, all at once," sobbed Mrs. Gaunt. "Besides, I wanted to shield his good name, whose dear life they pretend I have taken."

As soon as she recovered her composure, she begged Sir George Neville to ride to the "Packhorse" for her. Sir George assented eagerly; but asked how he was to find it. "I have thought of that too," said she. "His black horse has been to and fro. Ride that horse into Lancashire, and give him his head: ten to one but he takes you to the place, or where you may hear of it. If not, go to Lancaster, and ask about the 'Packhorse.' He wrote to me from Lancaster: see." And she showed him the letter.

Sir George embraced with ardour this opportunity of serving her. "I'll be at Hershaw in one hour," said he: "and ride the black horse south at once."

"Excuse me," said Houseman; "but would it not be better for me to go? As a lawyer, I may be more able to cope with her."

"Nay," said Mrs. Gaunt, "Sir George is young and handsome: if he manages well, she will tell him more than she will you. All I beg of him is, to drop the chevalier, for this once, and see women with a woman's eyes and not a man's; see them as they are. Do not go telling a creature of this kind that she has had my money, as well as my husband, and ought to pity me lying here in prison. Keep me out of her sight as much as you can. Whether Griffith hath deceived her or not, you will never raise in her any feeling but love for him, and hatred for his lawful wife. Dress like a yeoman; go quietly, and lodge in the house a day or two; begin by flattering her; and then get from her when she saw him last, or heard from him. But indeed I fear you will surprise him with her."

"Fear?" exclaimed Sir George.

"Well, hope, then," said the lady; and a tear trickled down her face in a moment. "But, if you do, promise me, on your honour as a gentleman, not to affront him. For I know you think him a villain."

"A d——d villain, saving your presence."

"Well, sir, you have said it to me. Now promise me to say nought to *him*, but just this: 'Rose Gaunt's mother she lies in Carlisle gaol, to be tried for her life for murdering you. She begs of you not to let her die publicly upon the scaffold; but quietly at home, of her broken heart.'"

"Write it," said Sir George, with the tears in his eyes, "that I may just put it in his hand: for I can never utter your sweet words to such a monster as he is."

Armed with this appeal, and several minute instructions, which it is needless to particularize here, that staunch friend rode into Lancashire.

And next day the black horse justified his mistress' sagacity, and his own.

He seemed all along to know where he was going, and late in the afternoon he turned off the road on to a piece of green: and Sir George, with beating heart, saw right before him the sign of the "Packhorse," and, on coming nearer, the words

THOMAS LEICESTER.

He dismounted at the door, and asked if he could have a bed.

Mrs. Vint said yes; and supper into the bargain, if he liked.

He ordered a substantial supper directly.

Mrs. Vint saw at once it was a good customer, and showed him into the parlour.

He sat down by the fire. But, the moment she retired, he got up and made a circuit of the house, looking quietly into every window, to see if he could catch a glance of Griffith Gaunt.

There were no signs of him; and Sir George returned to his parlour heavy-hearted. One hope, the greatest of all, had been defeated directly. Still, it was just possible that Griffith might be away on temporary business.

In this faint hope, Sir George strolled about till his supper was ready for him.

When he had eaten his supper, he rang the bell and, taking advantage of a common custom, insisted on the landlord, Thomas Leicester, taking a glass with him.

"Thomas Leicester!" said the girl. "He is not at home. But I'll send Master Vint."

Old Vint came in, and readily accepted an invitation to drink his guest's health.

Sir George found him loquacious, and soon extracted from him that his daughter Mercy was Leicester's wife, that Leicester was gone on a journey, and that Mercy was in care for him. "Leastways," said he, "she is very dull, and cries at times when her mother speaks of him; but she is too close to say much."

All this puzzled Sir George Neville sorely.

But greater surprises were in store.

The next morning, after breakfast, the servant came and told him Dame Leicester desired to see him.

He started at that; but put on nonchalance, and said he was at her service.

He was ushered into another parlour, and there he found a grave, comely, young woman, seated working, with a child on the floor beside her. She rose quietly; he bowed low and respectfully; she blushed faintly; but, with

every appearance of self-possession, curtsied to him; then eyed him point-blank a single moment; and requested him to be seated.

"I hear, sir," said she, "you did ask my father many questions last night; may I ask you one?"

Sir George coloured, but bowed assent.

"From whom had you the black horse you ride?"

Now, if Sir George had not been a veracious man, he would have been caught directly. But, although he saw at once the oversight he had committed, he replied, "I had him of a lady in Cumberland, one Mistress Gaunt."

Mercy Vint trembled.

"No doubt," said she, softly. "Excuse my question; you shall understand that the horse is well known here."

"Madam," said Sir George, "if you admire the horse, he is at your service for twenty pounds, though indeed he is worth more."

"I thank you, sir," said Mercy, "I have no desire for the horse whatever; and be pleased to excuse my curiosity; you must think me impertinent."

"Nay, madam," said Sir George, "I consider nothing impertinent that hath procured me the pleasure of an interview with you."

He then, as directed by Mrs. Gaunt, proceeded to flatter the mother and the child, and exerted those powers of pleasing, which had made him irresistible in society.

Here, however, he found they went a very little way. Mercy did not even smile. She cast out of her dove-like eyes a gentle, humble, reproachful glance, as much as to say, "What! do I seem so vain a creature as to believe all this?"

Sir George himself had tact and sensibility; and, by and by, became discontented with the part he was playing, under those meek, honest, eyes.

There was a pause: and, as her sex have a wonderful art of reading the face, Mercy looked at him steadily, and said, "*Yes*, sir, 'tis best to be straight-forward, especially with women-folk."

Before he could recover this little facer, she said, quietly, "What is your name?"

"George Neville."

"Well, George Neville," said Mercy, very slowly and softly, "when you have a mind to tell me what you came here for, and who sent you, you will find me in this little room. I seldom leave it now. I beg you to speak your errand to none but me." And she sighed deeply.

Sir George bowed low, and retired to collect his wits.

He had come here strongly prepossessed against Mercy. But, instead of a vulgar, shallow woman, whom he was to surprise into confession, he encountered a soft-eyed Puritan, all unpretending dignity, grace, propriety, and sagacity.

"Flatter her!" said he, to himself, "I might as well flatter an iceberg. Out-wit her! I feel like a child beside her."

He strolled about in a brown study, not knowing what to do.

She had given him a fair opening. She had invited him to tell the truth. But he was afraid to take her at her word: and yet what was the use to persist in what his own eyes told him was the wrong course?

Whilst he hesitated, and debated within himself, a trifling incident turned the scale.

A poor woman came begging, with her child, and was received rather roughly by Harry Vint. "Pass on, good woman," said he, "we want no tramps here."

Then a window was opened on the ground floor, and Mercy beckoned the woman. Sir George flattened himself against the wall, and listened to the two talking.

Mercy examined the woman gently but shrewdly, and elicited a tale of genuine distress. Sir George then saw her hand out to the woman some warm flannel for herself, a piece of stuff for the child, a large piece of bread, and a sixpence.

He also caught sight of Mercy's dove-like eyes, as she bestowed her alms, and they were lit with an inward lustre.

"She cannot be an ill woman," said Sir George. "I'll e'en go by my own eyes and judgment. After all, Mrs. Gaunt has never seen her; and I have."

He went and knocked at Mercy's door.

"Come in," said a mild voice.

Neville entered, and said, abruptly, and with great emotion, "Madam, I see you can feel for the unhappy; so I take my own way now, and appeal to your pity. I have come to speak to you on the saddest business."

"You come from *him*," said Mercy, closing her lips tight; but her bosom heaved. Her heart and her judgment grappled like wrestlers that moment.

"Nay, madam," said Sir George, "I come from *her*."

Mercy knew in a moment who "her" must be.

She looked scared, and drew back with manifest signs of repulsion.

The movement did not escape Sir George: it alarmed him: he remembered what Mrs. Gaunt had said; that this woman would be sure to hate Gaunt's lawful wife. But it was too late to go back. He did the next best thing, he rushed on.

He threw himself on his knees before Mercy Vint.

"Oh, madam," he cried, piteously, "do not set your heart against the most unhappy lady in England. If you did but know her, her nobleness, her misery! Before you steel yourself against me, her friend, let me ask you one question. Do you know where Mrs. Gaunt is at this moment?"

Mercy answered, coldly, "How should I know where she is?"

"Well then, she lies in Carlisle gaol."

"She—lies—in Carlisle gaol?" repeated Mercy, looking all confused.

"They accuse her of murdering her husband."

Mercy uttered a scream, and catching her child up off the floor, began to rock herself and moan over it.

"No, no, no," cried Sir George, "she is innocent, she is innocent."

"What is that to *me*?" cried Mercy, wildly. "He is murdered, he is

dead, and my child an orphan." And so she went on moaning and rocking herself.

"But I tell you he is not dead at all," cried Sir George. "'Tis all a mistake. When did you see him last?"

"More than six weeks ago."

"I mean, when did you hear from him last?"

"Never, since that day."

Sir George groaned aloud at this intelligence.

And Mercy, who heard him groan, was heart-broken. She accused herself of Griffith's death. "'Twas I who drove him from me," she said. "'Twas I who bade him go back to his lawful wife; and the wretch hated him. I sent him to his death." Her grief was wild, and deep; she could not hear Sir George's arguments.

But presently she said, sternly, "What does that woman say for herself?"

"Madam," said Sir George, dejectedly, "Heaven knows you are in no condition to fathom a mystery that hath puzzled wiser heads than yours or mine; and I am little able to lay the tale before you fairly: for your grief it moves me deeply, and I could curse myself for putting the matter to you so bluntly and so uncouthly. Permit me to retire a while and compose my own spirits for the task I have undertaken too rashly."

"Nay, George Neville," said Mercy, "stay you there: only give me a moment to draw my breath."

She struggled hard for a little composure, and, after a shower of tears, she hung her head over the chair like a crushed thing, but made him a sign of attention.

Sir George told the story as fairly as he could; only of course his bias was in favour of Mrs. Gaunt; but as Mercy's bias was against her, this brought the thing nearly square.

When he came to the finding of the body, Mercy was seized with a deadly faintness; and, though she did not become insensible, yet she was in no condition to judge or even to comprehend.

Sir George was moved with pity, and would have called for help; but she shook her head. So then he sprinkled water on her face, and slapped her hand: and a beautifully moulded hand it was.

When she got a little better she sobbed faintly, and sobbing thanked him: and begged him to go on.

"My mind is stronger than my heart," she said. "I'll hear it all, though it kill me where I sit."

Sir George went on, and, to avoid repetition, I must ask the reader to understand that he left out nothing whatever which has been hitherto related in these pages; and, in fact, told her one or two little things that I have omitted.

When he had done, she sat quite still a minute or two, pale as a statue.

Then she turned to Neville, and said solemnly, "You wish to know the truth in this dark matter: for dark it is in very sooth."

Neville was much impressed by her manner, and answered, respectfully "Yes, he desired to know—by all means."

"Then take my hand," said Mercy, "and kneel down with me."

Sir George looked surprised, but obeyed, and kneeled down beside her, with his hand in hers.

There was a long pause, and then took place a transformation.

The dove-like eyes were lifted to Heaven and gleamed like opals with an inward and celestial light; the comely face shone with a higher beauty, and the rich voice rose in ardent supplication.

"Thou God, to whom all hearts be known, and no secrets hid from thine eye, look down now on thy servant in sore trouble, that putteth her trust in thee. Give wisdom to the simple this day, and understanding to the lowly. Thou that didst reveal to babes and sucklings the great things that were hidden from the wise, oh show us the truth in this dark matter: enlighten us by thy spirit, for his dear sake, who suffered more sorrows than I suffer now, Amen. Amen."

Then she looked at Neville: and he said "Amen," with all his heart, and the tears in his eyes.

He had never heard real live prayer before. Here the little hand gripped his hard, as she wrestled, and the heart seemed to rise out of the bosom and fly to Heaven on the sublime and thrilling voice.

They rose, and she sat down; but it seemed as if her eyes once raised to Heaven in prayer could not come down again: they remained fixed and angelic, and her lips still moved in supplication.

Sir George Neville, though a loose liver, was no scoffer; he was smitten with reverence for this inspired countenance, and retired, bowing low and obsequiously.

He took a long walk, and thought it all over. One thing was clear, and consoling. He felt sure he had done wisely to disobey Mrs. Gaunt's instructions, and make a friend of Mercy, instead of trying to set his wits against hers. Ere he returned to the "Packhorse" he had determined to take another step in the right direction. He did not like to agitate her with another interview, so soon. But he wrote her a little letter.

"MADAM,—When I came here, I did not know you; and therefore I feared to trust you too far. But, now I do know you for the best woman in England, I take the open way with you.

"Know that Mrs. Gaunt said the man would be here with you; and she charged me with a few written lines to him. She would be angry if she knew that I had shown them to any other. Yet I take on me to show them to you: for I believe you are wiser than any of us, if the truth were known. I do therefore entreat you to read these lines, and tell me whether you think the hand that wrote them can have shed the blood of him to whom they are writ.

"I am, Madam,

"With profound respect,

"Your gratefully and very humble servant,

"GEORGE NEVILLE."

He very soon received a line in reply, written in a clear and beautiful handwriting.



"GRIFFITH GAUNT."

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"Mercy Vint sends you her duty; and she will speak to you at nine of the clock to-morrow morning. Pray for light."

At the appointed time Sir George found her working with her needle. His letter lay on a table before her.

She rose and curtsied to him, and called the servant to take away the child for a while. She went with her to the door and kissed the bairn several times at parting, as if he was going away for good. "I'm loath to let him go," said she to Neville; "but it weakens a mother's mind, to have her babe in the room; takes her attention off each moment. Pray you be seated. Well, sir, I have read these lines of Mistress Gaunt, and wept over them. Methinks I had not done so were they cunningly devised. Also I lay all night, and thought."

"That is just what she does."

"No doubt, sir; and the upshot is, I don't *feel* as if he was dead. Thank God."

"That is something," said, Neville. But he could not help thinking it was very little; especially to produce in a court of justice.

"And now," said she, thoughtfully, "you say that the real Thomas Leicester was seen thereabouts as well as my Thomas Leicester. Then answer me one little question. What had the real Thomas Leicester on his feet that night?"

"Nay, I know not," was the half-careless reply.

"Bethink you. 'Tis a question that must have been often put in your hearing."

"Begging your pardon, it was never put at all; nor do I see——"

"What, not at the inquest?"

"No."

"That is very strange. What, so many wise heads have bent over this riddle, and not one to ask how was yon pedlar shod!"

"Madam," said Sir George, "our minds were fixed upon the fate of Gaunt. Many did ask how was the pedlar armed; but none how was he shod."

"Hath he been seen since?"

"Not he; and that hath an ugly look; for the constables are out after him with hue and cry; but he is not to be found."

"Then," said Mercy, "I must e'en answer my own question. I do know how that pedlar was shod. WITH HOBNAILED SHOES."

Sir George bounded from his chair. One great ray of daylight broke in upon him.

"Ay," said Mercy, "she was right. Women do see clearer in some things than men. The pair went from my house to hers: he you call Griffith Gaunt had on a new pair of boots; and by the same token 'twas I did pay for them, and there is the receipt in that cupboard: he you call Thomas Leicester went hence in hobnailed shoes. I think the body they found was the body of Thomas Leicester the pedlar. May God have mercy on his poor unprepared soul."

Sir George uttered a joyful exclamation. But the next moment he had a doubt. "Ay, but," said he, "you forget the mole. 'Twas on that they built."

"I forget nought," said Mercy, calmly. "The pedlar had a black mole over his left temple. He showed it me in this very room. You have found the body of Thomas Leicester, and Griffith Gaunt is hiding from the law that he hath broken. He is afeared of her and her friends if he shows his face in Cumberland; he is afeared of my folk if he be seen in Lancashire. Ah, Thomas, as if I would let them harm thee."

Sir George Neville walked to and fro in grand excitement.

"Oh blessed day that I came hither. Madam, you are an angel. You will save an innocent broken-hearted lady from death and dishonour. Your good heart and rare wit have read in a moment the dark riddle that hath puzzled a county."

"George," said Mercy, gravely, "you have gotten the wrong end of the stick. The wise in their own conceit are blinded; in Cumberland, where all this befell, they went not to God for light, as you and I did, George."

In saying this, she gave him her hand to celebrate their success.

He kissed it devoutly, and owned afterward that it was the proudest moment of his life, when that sweet Puritan gave him her neat hand so cordially, with a pressure so gentle yet frank.

And now came the question how they were to make a Cumberland jury see this matter as they saw it.

He asked her would she come to the trial as a witness?

At that she drew back with manifest repugnance.

"My shame would be public. I must tell who I am; and what. A ruined woman."

"Say rather an injured saint. You have nothing to be ashamed of. All good men would feel for you."

Mercy shook her head. "Ay, but the women; shame is shame with us; right or wrong goes for little. Nay, I hope to do better for you than that. I must find *him*: and send him to deliver her. 'Tis his only chance of happiness."

She then asked him if he would draw up an advertisement of quite a different kind from those he had described to her.

He assented, and between them they concocted the following:—

"If Thomas Leicester, who went from the 'Packhorse,' two months ago, will come thither at once, Mercy will be much beholden to him, and tell him strange things that have befallen."

Sir George then, at her request, rode over to Lancaster, and inserted the above in the county paper, and also in a small sheet that was issued in the city three times a week. He had also handbills to the same effect printed, and sent into Cumberland and Westmoreland. Finally, he sent a copy to his man of business in London, with orders to insert it in all the journals.

Then he returned to the "Packhorse," and told Mercy what he had done.

The next day he bade her farewell, and away for Carlisle. It was a two days' journey. He reached Carlisle in the evening, and went all glowing to Mrs. Gaunt. "Madam," said he, "be of good cheer. I bless the day I went to see her; she is an angel of wit and goodness." He then related to her, in glowing terms, most that had passed between Mercy and him. But, to his surprise, Mrs. Gaunt wore a cold, forbidding air.

"This is all very well," said she. "But 'twill avail me little unless *he* comes before the judge and clears me; and she will never let him do that."

"Ay, that she will—if she can find him."

"If she can find him? How simple you are."

"Nay, madam, not so simple but I can tell a good woman from a bad one, and a true from a false."

"What! when you are in love with her? Not if you were the wisest of your sex."

"In love with her?" cried Sir George; and coloured high.

"Ay," said the lady. "Think you I cannot tell? Don't deceive yourself. You have gone and fallen in love with her. At your years! Not that 'tis any business of mine."

"Well, madam," said Sir George, stiffly, "say what you please on that score; but, at least, welcome my good news."

Mrs. Gaunt begged him to excuse her petulance; and thanked him kindly for all he had just done. But the next moment she rose from her chair in great agitation, and burst out, "I'd as lieve die as owe anything to that woman."

Sir George remonstrated. "Why hate her? She does not hate you."

"Oh yes she does. 'Tis not in nature she should do any other."

"Her acts prove the contrary."

"Her acts! she has *done* nothing, but make fair promises; and that has blinded you. Women of this sort are very cunning, and never show their real characters to a man. No more; prithee mention not her name to me. It makes me ill. I know he is with her at this moment. Ah, let me die, and be forgotten: since I am no more beloved."

The voice was sad and weary now, and the tears ran fast.

Poor Sir George was moved and melted, and set himself to flatter and console this impracticable lady, who hated her best friend in this sore strait, for being what she was herself, a woman; and was much less annoyed at being hanged than at not being loved.

When she was a little calmer, he left her, and rode off to Houseman. That worthy was delighted. "Get her to swear to those hobnailed shoes," said he, "and we shall shake them." He then let Sir George know that he had obtained private information which he would use in cross-examining a principal witness for the Crown. "However," he added, "do not deceive yourself, nothing can make the prisoner really safe but the appearance of Griffith Gaunt. He has such strong motives for coming to light. He is heir to a fortune, and his wife is accused of murdering him; the jury will never believe he is alive till they see him. That man's prolonged disappearance is hideous. It turns my blood cold when I think of it."

"Do not despair on that score," said Neville. "I believe our good angel will produce him."

Three days only before the assizes, came the long-expected letter from Mercy Vint. Sir George tore it open, but bitter was his disappointment. The letter merely said that Griffith had not appeared in answer to her advertisements, and she was sore grieved and perplexed.

There were two postscripts, each on a little piece of paper.

First postscript, in a tremulous hand, "Pray."

Second postscript, in a firm hand, "Drain the water."

Houseman shrugged his shoulders impatiently. "Drain the water? Let the Crown do that. We should but fish up more trouble. And prayers quo' she! 'Tis not prayers we want, but evidence."

He sent his clerk off to travel post night and day, and subpoena Mercy, and bring her back with him to the trial. She was to have every comfort on the road, and be treated like a duchess.

The evening before the Assizes, Mrs. Gaunt's apartments were Mr. Houseman's head-quarters, and messages were coming and going all day, on matters connected with the defence.

Just at sunset, up rattled a postchaise, and the clerk got out and came haggard and bloodshot before his employer.

"The witness has disappeared, sir. Left home last Tuesday, with her child, and has never been seen nor heard of since."

Here was a terrible blow. They all paled under it; it seriously diminished the chances of an acquittal.

But Mrs. Gaunt bore it nobly. She seemed to rise under it.

She turned to Sir George Neville, with a sweet smile. "The noble heart sees base things noble. No wonder then an artful woman deluded *you*. He has left England with her; and condemned me to the gallows. In cold blood. So be it. I shall defend myself."

She then sat down with Mr. Houseman, and went through the written case he had prepared for her: and showed him notes she had taken of full a hundred criminal trials great and small.

While they were putting their heads together, Sir George sat in a brown study, and uttered not a word. Presently he got up a little brusquely, and said, "I'm going to Hernshaw."

"What, at this time of night? What to do?"

"To obey my orders. To drain the mere."

"And who could have ordered you to drain my mere?"

"Mercy Vint."

Sir George uttered this in a very curious way, half ashamed, half resolute, and retired before Mrs. Gaunt could vent in speech the surprise and indignation that fired her eye.

Houseman implored her not to heed Sir George and his vagaries, but to bend her whole mind on those approved modes of defence with which he had supplied her.

Being now alone with her, he no longer concealed his great anxiety.

"We have lost an invaluable witness in that woman," said he. "I was mad to think she would come."

Mrs. Gaunt shivered with repugnance. "I would not have her come, for all the world," said she. "For Heaven's sake never mention her name to me. I want help from none but friends. Send Mrs. Houseman to me in the morning; and do not distress yourself so. I shall defend myself far better than you think. I have not studied a hundred trials for nought."

Thus the prisoner cheered up her attorney, and soon after insisted on his going home to bed, for she saw he was worn out by his exertions.

And now she was alone.

All was silent.

A few short hours, and she was to be tried for her life: tried, not by the All-wise Judge, but by fallible men, and under a system most unfavourable to the accused.

Worse than all this, she was a Papist: and, as ill-luck would have it, since her imprisonment an alarm had been raised that the Pretender meditated another invasion. This report had set juries very much against all the Romanists in the country, and had already perverted justice in one or two cases, especially in the North.

Mrs. Gaunt knew all this, and trembled at the peril to come.

She spent the early part of the night in studying her defence. Then she laid it quite aside, and prayed long and fervently.

Towards morning she fell asleep from exhaustion.

When she awoke, Mrs. Houseman was sitting by her bedside, looking at her, and crying.

They were soon clasped in each other's arms, condoling.

But presently Houseman came, and took his wife away rather angrily.

Mrs. Gaunt was prevailed on to eat a little toast and drink a glass of wine, and then she sat waiting her dreadful summons.

She waited, and waited, until she became impatient to face her danger.

But there were two petty larcenies on before her. She had to wait.

At last, about noon, came a message to say that the grand jury had found a true bill against her.

"Then may God forgive them!" said she.

Soon afterwards she was informed her time drew very near.

She made her toilet carefully, and passed with her attendant into a small room under the court.

Here she had to endure another chilling wait, and in a sombre room.

Presently she heard a voice above her cry out, "*The King versus Catherine Gaunt.*"

Then she was beckoned to.

She mounted some steps, badly lighted, and found herself in the glare of day, and greedy eyes, in the felon's dock.

In a matter entirely strange, we seldom know beforehand what we can do, and how we shall carry ourselves. Mrs. Gaunt no sooner set her foot in that dock, and saw the awful front of Justice face to face, than her tremors abated, and all her powers awoke, and she thrilled with love of life, and

bristled with all those fine arts of defence that nature lends to superior women.

She entered on that defence before she spoke a word; for she attacked the prejudices of the court, by deportment.

She curtsied reverently to the Judge, and contrived to make her reverence seem a willing homage, unmixed with fear.

She cast her eyes round and saw the court thronged with ladies and gentlemen she knew. In a moment she read in their eyes that only two or three were on her side. She bowed to those only; and they returned her courtesy. This gave an impression (a false one) that the gentry sympathized with her.

After a little murmur of functionaries, the Clerk of Arraignment turned to the prisoner, and said, in a loud voice, "Catherine Gaunt, hold up thy hand."

She held up her hand, and he recited the indictment, which charged that, not having the fear of God before her eyes, but being moved by the instigation of the Devil, she had on the fifteenth of October, in the tenth year of the reign of his present Majesty, aided and abetted one Thomas Leicester in an assault upon one Griffith Gaunt, Esq., and him, the said Griffith Gaunt, did with force and arms assassinate and do to death, against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

After reading the indictment, the Clerk of Arraignment turned to the prisoner, "How sayest thou, Catherine Gaunt, art thou guilty of the felony and murder whereof thou standest indicted—or not guilty?"

"I am not guilty."

"Culprit, how wilt thou be tried?"

"Culprit I am none, but only accused: I will be tried by God and my country."

"God send thee a good deliverance."

Mr. Whitworth, the junior counsel for the crown, then rose to open the case; but the prisoner, with a pale face, but most courteous demeanour, begged his leave to make a previous motion to the court. Mr. Whitworth bowed, and sat down. "My Lord," said she, "I have first a favour to ask: and that favour, methinks, you will grant, since it is but justice, impartial justice. My accuser, I hear, has two counsel; both learned and able. I am but a woman, and no match for their skill. Therefore, I beg your Lordship to allow me counsel on my defence, to matter of fact as well as of law. I know this is not usual; but it is just; and I am informed it has sometimes been granted in trials of life and death, and that your Lordship hath the power, if you have the will, to do me so much justice."

The Judge looked towards Mr. Serjeant Wiltshire, who was the leader on the other side: he rose instantly and replied to this purpose: "The prisoner is misinformed. The truth is, that from time immemorial, and down to the other day, a person indicted for a capital offence was never allowed counsel at all, except to matters of law, and these must be started by himself. By recent practice, the rule hath been so far relaxed that counsel have sometimes been permitted to examine, and cross-examine, witnesses for a prisoner;

but never to make observations on the evidence, nor to draw inferences from it to the point in issue."

Mrs. Gaunt. So, then, if I be sued for a small sum of money, I may have skilled orators to defend me against their like. But, if I be sued for my life and honour, I may not oppose skill to skill; but must stand here a child against you that are masters. 'Tis a monstrous iniquity, and you yourself, sir, will not deny it.

Serjeant Wiltshire. Madam, permit me: whether it be a hardship to deny full counsel to prisoners in criminal cases, I shall not pretend to say; but if it be, 'tis a hardship of the law's making, and not of mine nor of my lord's: and none have suffered by it (at least in our day) but those who had broken the law.

The Serjeant then stopped a minute, and whispered with his junior. After which he turned to the Judge. "My Lord, we, that are of counsel for the crown, desire to do nothing that is hard where a person's life is at stake. We yield to the prisoner any indulgence for which your Lordship can find a precedent in your reading; but no more: and so we leave the matter to you."

The Clerk of Arraignment. Crier, proclaim silence.

The Crier. Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! His Majesty's Justices do straitly charge all manner of persons to keep silence, on pain of imprisonment.

The Judge. Prisoner, what my Brother Wiltshire says, the law is clear in: there is no precedent for what you ask, and the contrary practice stares us in the face for centuries. What seems to you a partial practice, and, to be frank, some learned persons are of your mind, must be set against this, that in capital cases the burden of proof lies on the crown and not on the accused. Also it is my duty to give you all the assistance I can, and that I shall do. Thus then it is: you can be allowed counsel to examine your own witnesses, and cross-examine the witnesses for the crown; and speak to points of law, to be started by yourself,—but no further.

He then asked her what gentleman there present he should assign to her for counsel.

Her reply to this inquiry took the whole court by surprise, and made her solicitor, Houseman, very miserable. "None, my Lord," said she. "Half justice is injustice; and I will lend it no colour. I will not set able men to fight for me, with their hands tied, against men as able whose hands be free. Counsel, on terms so partial, I will have none. My counsel shall be three, and no more. Yourself, my Lord,—my Innocence,—and the Lord God Omniscient."

These words, grandly uttered, caused a dead silence in the court, but only for a few moments. It was broken by the loud mechanical voice of the crier, who proclaimed silence, and then called the names of the jury that were to try this cause.

Mrs. Gaunt listened keenly to the names; familiar and bourgeois names, that now seemed regal, for they who owned them held her life in their hands.

Each juryman was sworn in the grand old form, now slightly curtailed.

"Joseph King, look upon the prisoner.—You shall well and truly try, and

true deliverance make, between our Sovereign Lord the King and the prisoner at the bar, whom you shall have in charge, and a true verdict give, according to the evidence. So help you God."

Mr. Whitworth, for the crown, then opened the case, but did little more than translate the indictment into more rational language.

He sat down, and Serjeant Wiltshire addressed the court somewhat after this fashion:—

"May it please your Lordship, and you, gentlemen of the jury, this is a case of great expectation and importance. The prisoner at the bar, a gentlewoman by birth and education, and, as you must have already perceived, by breeding also, stands indicted for no less a crime than murder.

"I need not paint to you the heinousness of this crime: you have but to consult your own breasts. Who ever saw the ghastly corpse of the victim weltering in its blood, and did not feel his own blood run cold through his veins? Has the murderer fled? With what eagerness do we pursue! with what zeal apprehend! with what joy do we bring him to justice! Even the dreadful sentence of death does not shock us, when pronounced upon him. We hear it with solemn satisfaction; and acknowledge the justice of the Divine sentence, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'

"But, if this be the case in every common murder, what shall be thought of her who has murdered her husband? The man in whose arms she has lain, and whom she has sworn at God's altar to love and cherish. Such a murderer is a robber as well as an assassin; for she robs her own children of their father, that tender parent, who can never be replaced in this world.

"Gentlemen, it will, I fear, be proved that the prisoner at the bar hath been guilty of murder in this high degree: and, though I will endeavour rather to extenuate than to aggravate, yet I trust (sic) I have such a history to open as will shock the ears of all who hear me.

"Mr. Griffith Gaunt, the unfortunate deceased, was a man of descent and worship. As to his character, it was inoffensive; he was known as a worthy kindly gentleman; deeply attached to her who now stands accused of his murder. They lived happily together for some years; but, unfortunately, there was a thorn in the rose of their wedded life; he was of the Church of England; she was, and is, a Roman Catholic. This led to disputes: and no wonder; since this same unhappy difference hath more than once embroiled a nation, let alone a single family.

"Well, gentlemen, about a year ago there was a more violent quarrel than usual between the deceased and the prisoner at the bar: and the deceased left his home for several months.

"He returned upon a certain day in this year, and a reconciliation, real or apparent, took place. He left home again soon afterwards, but only for a short period. On the 15th of last October he suddenly returned for good, as he intended: and here begins the tragedy, to which what I have hitherto related was but the prologue.

"Scarce an hour before he came, one Thomas Leicester entered the house. Now this Thomas Leicester was a creature of the prisoner's. He had been

her gamekeeper; and was now a pedlar. It was the prisoner who set him up as a pedlar, and purchased the wares to start him in his trade.

"Gentlemen, this pedlar, as I shall prove, was concealed in the house when the deceased arrived. One Caroline Ryder, who is the prisoner's gentlewoman, was the person who first informed her of Leicester's arrival, and it seems she was much moved; Mrs. Ryder will tell you she fell into hysterics. But, soon after, her husband's arrival was announced, and then the passion was of a very different kind. So violent was her rage against this unhappy man that, for once, she forgot all prudence, and threatened his life before a witness. Yes, gentlemen, we shall prove that this gentlewoman, who in appearance and manners might grace a court, was so transported out of her usual self that she held up a knife—a knife, gentlemen, and vowed to put it into her husband's heart. And this was no mere temporary ebullition of wrath; we shall see presently that, long after she had had time to cool, she repeated this menace to the unfortunate man's face. The first threat, however, was uttered in her own bedroom, before her confidential servant, Caroline Ryder aforesaid. But now the scene shifts. She has, to all appearance, recovered herself, and sits smiling at the head of her table; for, you must know, she entertained company that night—persons of the highest standing in the county.

"Presently her husband, all unconscious of the terrible sentiments she entertained towards him, and the fearful purpose she had announced, enters the room, makes obeisance to his guests, and goes to take his wife's hand.

"What does she? She draws back with so strange a look and such forbidding words, that the company were disconcerted. Consternation fell on all present; and, ere long, they made their excuses, and left the house. Thus the prisoner was left alone with her husband. But, meantime, curiosity had been excited by her strange conduct, and some of the servants, with foreboding hearts, listened at the door of the dining-room. What did they hear, gentlemen? A furious quarrel, in which, however, the deceased was comparatively passive, and the prisoner again threatened his life, with vehemence. Her passion, it is clear, had not cooled.

"Now it may fairly be alleged, on behalf of the prisoner, that the witnesses for the Crown were on one side of the door, the prisoner and the deceased on the other; and that such evidence should be received with caution. I grant this—where it is not sustained by other circumstances, or by direct proofs. Let us then give the prisoner the benefit of this doubt, and let us inquire how the deceased himself understood her; he who not only heard the words, and the accents, but saw the looks, whatever they were, that accompanied them.

"Gentlemen, he was a man of known courage and resolution; yet he was found, after this terrible interview, much cowed and dejected. He spoke to Mrs. Ryder of his death as an event not far distant, and so went to his bedroom in a melancholy and foreboding state: and where was that bedroom? He was thrust, by his wife's orders, into a small chamber, and not allowed to enter hers: he, the master of the house, her husband, and her lord.

"But his interpretation of the prisoner's words did not end there. He left us a further comment by his actions next ensuing. He dared not (I beg pardon, this is my inference; receive it as such), he *did* not, remain in that house a single night. He bolted his chamber door inside; and in the very dead of night, notwithstanding the fatigues of the day's journey (for he had ridden some distance), he let himself out by the window, and reached the ground safely, though it was a height of fourteen feet; a leap, gentlemen, that few of us would venture to take. But what will not men risk when destruction is at their heels? He did not wait even to saddle his horse; but fled on foot. Unhappy man, he fled from danger, and met his death.

"From the hour when he went up to bed none of the inmates of the house ever saw Griffith Gaunt alive; but one Thomas Hayes, a labourer, saw him walking in a certain direction at one o'clock that morning; and behind him, gentlemen, there walked another man.

"Who was that other man?

"When I have told you (and this is an essential feature of the case) how the prisoner was employed during the time that her husband lay quaking in his little room, waiting an opportunity to escape,—when I have told you this, I fear you will divine who it was that followed the deceased, and for what purpose.

"Gentlemen, when the prisoner had threatened her husband in person, as I have described, she retired to her own room, but not to sleep. She ordered her maid, Mrs. Ryder, to bring Thomas Leicester to her chamber. Yes, gentlemen, she received this pedlar, at midnight, in her bed-chamber.

"Now, an act so strange as this admits, I think, but of two interpretations. Either she had a guilty amour with this fellow, or she had some extraordinary need of his services. Her whole character, by consent of the witnesses, renders it very improbable that she would descend to a low amour. Moreover she acted too publicly in the matter. The man, as we know, was her tool, her creature: she had bought his wares for him, and set him up as a pedlar. She openly summoned him to her presence, and kept him there about half an hour.

"He went from her, and very soon after is seen, by Thomas Hayes, following Griffith Gaunt—at one o'clock in the morning—that Griffith Gaunt, who, after that hour, was never seen alive.

"Gentlemen, up to this point, the evidence is clear, connected, and cogent; but it rarely happens in cases of murder that any human eye sees the very blow struck. The penalty is too severe for such an act to be done in the presence of an eye-witness: and not one murderer in ten could be convicted without the help of circumstantial evidence.

"The next link, however, is taken up by an ear-witness, and, in some cases, the ear is even better evidence than the eye; for instance, as to the discharge of firearms: for, by the eye alone, we could not positively tell whether a pistol had gone off or had but flashed in the pan. Well, then, gentlemen, a few minutes after Mr. Gaunt was last seen alive, which was by Thomas Hayes, Mrs. Ryder, who had retired to her bedroom, heard the said Gaunt distinctly cry for help: she also heard a pistol-shot discharged. This took

place by the side of a lake or large pond near the house, called the mere. Mrs. Ryder alarmed the house, and she and the other servants proceeded to her master's room: they found it bolted from the inside. They broke it open. Mr. Gaunt had escaped by the window, as I have already told you.

"Presently in comes the prisoner from out of doors. This was at one o'clock in the morning. Now she appears to have seen at once that she must explain her being abroad at that time, so she told Mrs. Ryder she had been out—praying."

(Here some people laughed harshly; but were threatened severely, and silenced.)

"Is that credible? Do people go out of doors at one o'clock in the morning, to pray? Nay; but I fear it was to do an act, that years of prayer and penitence cannot efface.

"From that moment Mr. Gaunt was seen no more among living men. And what made his disappearance the more mysterious was that he had actually at this time just inherited largely from his namesake Mr. Gaunt of Biggleswade; and his own interest, and that of the other legatees, required his immediate presence. Mr. Atkins, the testator's solicitor, advertised for this unfortunate gentleman; but he did not appear to claim his fortune. Then plain men began to put this and that together, and cried out 'foul play!'

"Justice was set in motion at last: but was embarrassed by the circumstance that the body of the deceased could not be found.

"At last, Mr. Atkins, the solicitor, being unable to get the estate I have mentioned administered, for want of proof of Griffith Gaunt's decease, entered heartily in this affair, on mere civil grounds. He asked the prisoner, before several witnesses, if she would permit him to drag that piece of water by the side of which Mr. Gaunt was heard to cry for help, and, after that, seen no more.

"The prisoner did not reply; but Mr. Houseman, her solicitor, a very worthy man, who has, I believe, or had, up to that moment, a sincere conviction of her innocence, answered for her, and told Mr. Atkins he was welcome to drag it or drain it. Then the prisoner said nothing. She fainted away.

"After this, you may imagine with what expectation the water was dragged. Gentlemen, after hours of fruitless labour, a body was found.

"But here an unforeseen circumstance befriended the prisoner. It seems that piece of water swarms with enormous pike and other ravenous fish. These had so horribly mutilated the deceased, that neither form nor feature remained to swear by: and, as the law wisely and humanely demands that in these cases a body shall be identified beyond doubt, justice bade fair to be baffled again. But lo! as often happens in cases of murder, Providence interposed and pointed with unerring finger to a slight but infallible mark. The deceased gentleman was known to have a large mole over his left temple. It had been noticed by his servants, and his neighbours. Well, gentlemen, the greedy fish had spared this mole; spared it perhaps by His command, who bade the whale swallow Jonah, yet not destroy him. There it was,

clear and infallible. It was examined by several witnesses; it was recognized; it completed that chain of evidence, some of it direct, some of it circumstantial, which I have laid before you very briefly, and every part of which I shall now support by credible witnesses."

He called thirteen witnesses, including Mr. Atkins, Thomas Hayes, Jane Banister, Caroline Ryder, and others, and their evidence in chief bore out every positive statement the counsel had made.

In cross-examining these witnesses Mrs. Gaunt took a line that agreeably surprised the court. It was not for nothing she had studied a hundred trials with a woman's observation and patient docility. She had found out how badly people plead their own causes, and had noticed the reasons: one of which is that they say too much, and stray from the point. The line she took, with one exception, was keen brevity.

She cross-examined Thomas Hayes as follows.

SONG.

SWEET looks!—I thought them love;
 Alas, how much mistaken!
 A dream a dream will prove,
 When time is come to waken.
 She was friendly, fair, and kind;
 I was weak of wit, I find.
 Hope, adieu!—for now I see
 Her look of love, and not for me.

I see within her eyes
 A tender blissful token;
 Hope drops down and dies,
 But no sad word is spoken.
 Soon and silent let me go;
 She, that knew not, shall not know.
 Joy, good-bye!—for now I see
 Her look of love, and not for me.

The fault was mine alone,
 Who, from her gracious sweetness,
 Made fancies all my own
 Of heavenly love's completeness,—
 This from me, poor fool! as far
 As from the earthworm shines the star.
 Dream, farewell!—for now I see
 Her look of love, and not for me.

W. A.

GARIBALDI.

(Continued from p. 207.)

BACK IN ITALY. 1854—1859.

IN 1854, Garibaldi, the tallow-merchant, arrived in Genoa. He had amassed sufficient money to purchase the little island of Caprera, on the coast of Sardinia, and thither he now betook himself to await the course of events, and to mature those plans which have since defied all military speculation and astonished Europe. About this time the Austrian Emperor violated the terms of that treaty which bound him to respect the Venetian frontier, and invaded Sardinia. The moment anxiously expected by all true patriots had arrived—there was a pretext for attacking Austria; what might not that attack lead to? Venice, Verona, Milan, might be wrested from the oppressor. Thousands in each of these cities were ready for rebellion. Thousands in Sardinia were ready to march to their rescue. Cavour, the many-sided, the astute, the patriotic premier of Italy, was ready to organize relations with France. Napoleon III. was ready to march with a splendid army to “fight for an idea,”—that “idea” of liberty which the nation had determined should become, ere long, a fact. Victor Emmanuel, the “Ré galantuomo,” was ready to place himself at the head of his cavalry; Garibaldi, the darling of the people, the blameless patriot, was ready with the magic of his presence to spread that wild contagious enthusiasm which it is impossible to describe to those who have not felt it, and to sweep, as he alone can, the winds and waves of revolution into the channel of national conquest and glory.

Ere the first shot was fired Garibaldi hastened to Turin, and offered his services to the king. Victor Emmanuel received his great subject with open arms; for he himself is a brave soldier at heart—a man who hates ceremony and diplomacy of all kinds, although wise enough to see their absolute necessity; a man of views most direct and simple, of instincts strong and passionate, of single-hearted devotion to the good of Italy, of folly and weakness most undoubted, and yet of a character so undisguised and simple that his very want of self-respect will sometimes elicit a sympathetic *Evviva!* from his really affectionate people. With Garibaldi the king was an idea. He accepts a constitutional monarchy as the purest form of republicanism. “You,” said he to an Englishman, “are the freest people in the world;” and he accepts the king as the embodiment of the nation’s honour. “The ‘king,’ meaning the ‘kingly office,’ does no wrong, he must never be blamed: the Egyptians, who were the first people who understood how to govern, always praised their kings.” But apart from this view, Garibaldi is warmly attached to the king’s person, and silences all scandals and other abuse of his royal master with the words, “I have seen the king fight for Italy!”

At the commencement of the war Garibaldi wore the Piedmontese uniform, as general of the Chasseurs of the Alps, with orders to recruit *ad libitum*. The flower of Italian youth flocked to his standard, impatient for action; but they were soon checked. The Piedmontese generals, Cialdini and La Marmora,

were growing jealous of the brilliant and "irregular" leader. He was hampered in every way, promised supplies which never arrived, marched and counter-marched, obliged to co-operate in imbecile plans, condemned to hopeless inaction. He longed to throw off the stiff uniform, and sighed for the loose shirt and grey trousers, and the liberty of action without which his genius seemed paralyzed. Suddenly leaving his "chasseurs" at Romagnano, he pushed for the king's head-quarters, and praying for an interview, begged his majesty to release him from the regular army, and allow him to make war with his "chasseurs" when and where he chose. The king smiled, and taking him by the hand, bade him follow the bent of his genius, adding, "I have only one regret, that of not being able to follow you!"

In five hours the general was again at the head of his "chasseurs." No more slow marches—no more dullness or inaction—a series of exploits now began which, whilst they steadily crushed the Austrians, compelled even the French officers to admit that the guerillero was a consummate general, and elicited the admiration of Napoleon, who sent, in the most flattering manner, to congratulate his irregular ally. We must remember that Garibaldi's tactics were such as could only be sanctioned by success. At Varese he was constantly opposed General Urban, seventeen thousand strong, with five thousand or even two thousand chasseurs, and in every case proved victorious.

In this short and startling campaign all the Garibaldian characteristics were brilliantly illustrated. Daring bravery, indomitable will, inexhaustible artifice; indeed, against overwhelming odds, the impudence and effrontery of Garibaldi's tactics were such as could only be sanctioned by success. At Varese he was surprised by Urban with seventeen thousand troops; there seemed no chance of escape. Night came on, and the Austrian being sure of his game, deferred the attack till morning. Garibaldi, leaving two hundred sharpshooters on the walls to represent the army, stole out in the dark and fell on the enemy's flank. The infantry broke and fled in disorder, even the cavalry were powerless, and the morning light displayed the scattered forces of the Austrians, and the victorious chasseurs in pursuit. Once again during the war was Garibaldi surrounded by Urban; he had occupied a hill, and Urban was watching him in the plain below. All night the camp fires blazed brightly on the hill; but at break of day, when Urban came up the hill, he found no one there. On the 15th of June, 1859, the famous advance on Brescia took place. Garibaldi split up his little band into nine or ten columns, which advanced from different sides all at once. If the Austrians had but known there was nothing behind them! But they could not believe that the guerillero would advance alone upon a place which even the allied armies of France and Piedmont hesitated to attack. These were doubtless the advanced pickets of the great army,—these ten handfuls of men! On they came, with nothing really but their impudence to back them; and as they came up a panic seized the enemy, and Brescia was evacuated. At last a few red shirts seemed quite sufficient for ordinary occasions, and towns were captured just on Nelson's own principle of cutting out ships. Idra was taken thus. Eighteen men were packed in an omnibus, preceded by Colonel Türr and Major Bedmir in a cart. This was the besieging party. When they arrived the

eighteen men garrisoned the town, and the two officers returned for further instructions. When the general himself appeared, Urban was heard to swear dreadfully, the soldiers crossed themselves, declared the devil was leading the charge, and fled accordingly. Bergamo, Brescia, Lecco, Salò were gained in little short of a month, and still Garibaldi was fresh, and the Austrians steadily retreating. At the same time a fearful blow was struck by Victor Emmanuel at Palestro, and by the French emperor at Magenta. In Venice men were holding their breath—at any hour they might be free; the deliverer was coming on with gigantic strides from the ramparts of Verona; every cloud of dust on the white road was watched with intense anxiety; firing was actually heard in the distance, Garibaldi was coming! To-morrow Verona might be free, when, like a sudden blight upon Paradise, fell the news of an armistice between the allies and Austria, and like a great funeral pall spread over the burning hearts of three millions of Italians came the still more disastrous news of the "Provisional Peace" of Villafranca. This was Napoleon's doing. To suit his convenience the question of Venetia was to be kept open. If Italy went on with the war now she would have to fight France and Austria. There was no choice. The king of Italy was in the deepest sorrow—Garibaldi was furious—Cavour rather than sign the peace resigned. The people seemed mostly paralyzed by this great national calamity; it is a fact that many in Milan, Verona, and Venice, went mad, whilst others, in a paroxysm of rage and disappointment, committed suicide.

Garibaldi issued a proclamation calling for a million of muskets, with a broad hint that they would be wanted for Southern Italy in a very short time; and with this bold and defiant protest retired to Genoa.

SICILY. "GARIBALDI IS COMING!" 1860.

Sicily and Naples, groaning under the misrule of the Bourbon king, Francis II., did not share in the sorrow of Northern Italy. The peace set Garibaldi at liberty, and it was well known that he was now looking southward. But whatever he does now must be done single-handed against the kingdom of Naples. No allies but the people here. Victor Emmanuel hides his face, peeping through his fingers perhaps. Could never think of deposing a neighbouring king like himself; has no idea where Garibaldi is; supposes he is at Genoa or Caprera; has not heard that Garibaldi on a certain moonlight night seized two Sardinian steamers, crammed them with one thousand and eighty volunteers, and steamed out of Genoa; if it is true, thinks he may be going to land in the Romagna, and bother the pope; cannot in the least say—who ever could say what Garibaldi was going to do next? does not think it likely that he will take the Two Sicilies with one thousand and eighty men; perhaps had better stop the expedition at once, and so gives directions to Admiral Persano to sail after it immediately, and by all means—not to catch it.

Leaving Garibaldi to float quietly down the lovely western coast of Italy, with the faint blue Apennines so clear upon the pale rose sky of the early

summer morning ; and leaving his gallant crew, whom all the beauties of the Mediterranean in spring could not preserve from dreadful sea-sickness, so much so that the gallant Colonel T'irr prayed to be thrown overboard ; and when asked by the general whether he was ready to be shot, replied he should certainly prefer that to remaining at sea. Skipping such-like harrowing details, let us arrive in Italy before the volunteers, and take a rapid glance at the situation.

The news of Magenta and the Garibaldian victories had thrown the Sicilians into a fever of excitement. Little jets of conspiracy were continually breaking out and being cruelly extinguished. Our friends who complain of the police in Hyde Park would perhaps have preferred Salvator Maniscalco to Sir Richard Mayne. This worthy head of police would enter the houses of the disaffected nobility ; smash their looking-glasses, pull their wives and daughters out of bed, and burn their farms. He invented an "Angelic" mask, an iron apparatus to be screwed down on the head and crush the brain very slowly. He hung up people by their waist till they died, and shot them without trial. When things come to this, it needs no prophet to foretell the downfall of the powers that be. Secret communities were formed ; secret conspiracies matured. Palermo itself was on the point of rising. Riso, a noble patriot, had organized a revolt. Twenty-seven of the conspirators were surprised ; escape was possible, but Riso cries to his companions, "One thing is yet wanting to our country—martyrs !" and every one of them fight till they are cut to pieces by the Neapolitan troops.

About this time a newspaper is introduced, in spite of the police, containing an account of Garibaldi having set sail. The news runs through the island like wildfire ; numbers fly to the hills, and are received by the country people ; and little bands are organized, but they have no arms. The streets of Palermo are crowded ; the name of Garibaldi is in every mouth ; the secret committee has directed all the people to turn out at a given hour to ascertain their unanimity ; every one is on foot ; the ladies wear the Piedmont colours. The children in troops, sing out loud, "Garibaldi is coming, Garibaldi is coming !" Maniscalco is furious. The soldiers are ordered out and patrol the streets ; they urge the people to shout "Long live Francis II." Not a voice replies. Presently one cries out "Long live Victor Emmanuel !" He falls pierced with bayonets ; an indiscriminate slaughter of an unarmed and defenceless people commences, and the whole population rush to their homes. The next morning, as if by magic, the walls and houses of Palermo are covered all over with thousands of placards—"Garibaldi is coming." Not a Sicilian stirs out the whole day, blinds and shutters are closed, the streets are silent and deserted ; but at even-fall the shutters are raised, and thousands of eyes are bent towards the hills around Palermo from whence is coming their salvation. One morning (13th of May, 1860) a cry rings through the town, and is suddenly taken up by the whole population, "Garibaldi is come !"

Quietly and rapidly the general had landed at Marsala, seized the telegraph, and employed it to delude the Neapolitan military committee at Trapani. Not a moment was lost. On their march towards Salemi they are joined by hundreds of volunteer peasantry ; even the priests side with the people, and

preach the crusade of liberty. Brother John, a young monk, is continually at the general's side; he reminds him that the people are superstitious, that he himself is excommunicated; tells him he must enter the nearest church, and in the sight of all the people be blessed by a priest. At the church door Garibaldi has uncovered his head and kneels down. Brother John rushes to the altar, takes possession of the Holy Sacrament, comes forth to the assembled multitude, and with hands spread above the conqueror in solemn benediction, exclaims, "Let all behold! here is the victor humbling himself before Him who alone giveth victory!" The troops are next blessed in the name of God, Italy, and Liberty, and preceded by Garibaldi, the procession then moves on, whilst Brother John bears on high the crucifix before them. The villages through which they passed rang with acclamations; the people brought provisions, and thronged about the deliverers; not a theft, not an outrage was committed; it was well known that the smallest license would be punished by instant death. "The cause of Liberty," said Garibaldi, "was sacred; her children must be brave and pure." They were marching rapidly to Calatafimi to meet the Neapolitans gathered there in great force; the town is on a sloping hill; at some miles from it they halt in the plain. The day is fearfully hot; they are exhausted with a long march; in the distance, down the hill, come the Neapolitans in overpowering numbers; ten minutes must elapse before they come within range. "Let us take a little rest," says Garibaldi, and following his example, they all sit down on the ground. In another minute the Garibaldian call is sounded on the horns. The enemy halts; a battery is placed in position to support them, then they come on; the Garibaldians receive the first volley sitting. "Now with the bayonet!" cries Garibaldi, and waving his sword, rushes into their very midst. The fighting lasted several hours; the Neapolitans fired all their shot away, and then threw stones. A body of men, led by Garibaldi, completely exhausted, towards the close of the day, staggered and fell down together. "What are we about now?" says the general. "We're only taking breath," cry the poor fellows; "we'll begin again directly." Garibaldi alone stood erect, and immediately became a mark for the Neapolitans; his men, on seeing this, instantly gathered round him. "This," says the general, "is the final charge." "It's been the final charge all day," says one, joking. Indeed, the general had often said so.

The day ended in the complete rout of the Neapolitans. The Garibaldians lost a hundred and ten men and sixteen officers, and after the last charge dropped down exhausted on the field and slept soundly amongst the heaps of dead and wounded. The Neapolitans now fell back upon Palermo, guarding all the approaches. As they were twenty-seven thousand strong, and Garibaldi had but seven hundred and fifty regulars and about two thousand peasants, a direct encounter must be declined—all the regular roads must be avoided. It was the general's plan to drop upon the town from the hills. By forced marches over the most rugged and impassable mountain passes with incredible speed, the army of deliverance made its way, meeting with nothing but the wild goat and the startled eagle. Suddenly on the heights round Palermo appeared the Garibaldian outposts; they spread themselves out for

miles in single files to produce the impression of an immense army, but in fact the army was all outposts. The Neapolitans knew better than to beard the lion in his den by attacking the guerillero in the mountains; and strongly fortifying the Ponte dell Amiraglio, which was the key of their position, waited patiently. Garibaldi announced his intention of taking Palermo on the 27th of May, and requested Ebor, the *Times* correspondent, to join his camp and write an account of his approaching victory.

On the 27th of May, thirty men were sent to storm the Admiral's bridge, which was carried ultimately by the arrival of the veterans under Türr and Bixio. The road was now open to Palermo, but that road was swept with grape-shot from the concentrated fire of four Neapolitan batteries. On that road stood Garibaldi, Türr, and Ebor, the *Times* correspondent. Under the eyes of the general the first column passed into Palermo. The inhabitants threw out mattresses and furniture for barricades. The Toledo and many wide streets were carried at the point of the bayonet. Garibaldi and staff took up their abode in the Piazza Bologna, and sat down to dinner in the palace. At that moment the bombardment began from the castle and ships in the harbour, at the same time a Neapolitan column retook the Toledo. The Garibaldians were flying in disorder, when the general, leaving his soup, said, "Come along, gentlemen, we must stop them ourselves." And after having stopped them by retaking three barricades, he returned to dinner. On the third day the Sardinian flag was floating over Palermo the Fortunate. Garibaldi proclaimed himself Dictator of Sicily; instructions were received from Naples for the royal troops to evacuate the place, until which time Garibaldi held them as prisoners of war. "It was really a curious sight," writes Alexander Dumas, "to see twenty thousand Neapolitans, provided with forty pieces of cannon, confined within their forts, their barracks, and their ships, and guarded by eight hundred Garibaldians, who brought them their rations twice a day!"

All day long the town rang with rejoicings, the peasants flocked in from the mountains, and the noise of drums and drilling and bugle-calls resounded in all the squares. The price of red cloth or red anything rose; the linen-draper had never driven such a trade before; the streets looked like fields sown over with poppies; the ladies wore red spencers and red feathers; red ribbons and red shirts could not be made fast enough. At night the town blazed with illuminations, and crowds were always to be found bellying under the general's window. Meanwhile he lived very quietly in the viceroy's palace, and was waited on by the viceroy's servants. They could not understand that he ate nothing but soup, vegetables, and a little meat once a day, drank nothing but water, slept on a hard bed, and would not suffer them to call him "Your Excellency." He allowed himself eight francs a day; but although in principle he was very severe upon injudicious alms-giving, his heart was so soft that the beggars always got his money from him before evening, and the dictator, who had just handed over 1,200,000*l.* to his poor-law officers, had continually to borrow small sums from his friends, which were always paid back the next day. The following inventory of the "Invincible Dictator's" wardrobe at this time has

been preserved to us :—"One old Piedmontese general's uniform—a relic of his campaigns on the Lakes, two pairs of grey trousers, an old felt hat, two red shirts, a few pocket handkerchiefs, two neckties, a sabre and a revolver, and a purse usually without the metal lining."

On the 20th of July was struck the last decisive blow against the Neapolitan power in Sicily. The battle of Milazzo was the hardest fight that had yet taken place, and it nearly cost Italy the life of her hero. The Neapolitans under Bosco, and vastly superior in number, fought with desperate valour, and the losses on both sides were very heavy. Garibaldi at one moment was surrounded by four dragoons, who summoned him to surrender; but he instantly drew his sword, and seizing the bridle of one of the foeman, cried, "Surrender yourself; I am Garibaldi." At that moment Colonel Missori rode up, shot three of the Neapolitans with his revolver, and the horse of the fourth, and so saved the general's life. Bosco, who had boasted that he would annihilate Garibaldi and his ragged volunteers, was now obliged to walk to the place of embarkation, through a double row of these same filibusters, at the head of his own defeated army, leaving in the hands of the enemy forty-four guns, half a field battery, ninety-four mules, forty-five horses, and quantities of ammunition.

NAPLES. "GARIBALDI IS COMING!" 1860.

The Cabinet of Piedmont was watching the Sicilian campaign; it was plain in a few days Garibaldi would cross over to Naples. The French Emperor had half promised to protect Francis II., and wrote an autograph letter to Victor Emmanuel to ask him, if possible, to persuade Garibaldi not to attack Naples. Victor Emmanuel wrote to Garibaldi, protesting against the invasion of Naples; but the general, easily tracing French influence, replied that "his mission was too noble to be relinquished; he had sworn to Italy to accomplish it; his programme was the same; he would not sheath his sword till Victor Emmanuel was King of Italy."

The news of Milazzo struck terror and astonishment into the heart of Francis II. "This," cried the poor little king, who had been brought up in ignorance of the true state of his government, and inherited a throne on the point of crumbling to pieces, "this is the hand of God. Ah! what have I done that my people should hate me, and the world conspire against me?" He called Don Liborio, his prime minister. "What do you advise me to do?"

"I advise your majesty to put yourself at the head of your army and march into Calabria."

The king paused for a moment. "That," said he, "I will do after our first success, but not before."

"In so important a crisis, then," added the premier, "I should further advise your majesty to consult your ministers at every step."

"Tell the ministers," replied the king, "that by the constitution of 1848 I am empowered to make peace and war as I please, and that I intend to maintain my rights."

Thereupon Don Liborio Romano resigned, and visiting Alexander Dumas'

yacht, then lying in the Bay of Naples, declared himself ready to co-operate with Garibaldi. Meanwhile recruits were pouring into Sicily from the Calabrian coast. They brought tidings of the state of feeling round Naples. The wildest excitement prevailed there. A small party and all the military, consisting of a well-organized army of eighty thousand men, stood by Francis. The masses were in favour of revolution, and an influential party in Naples itself, consisting of ex-Neapolitan ministers and the avowed patriots, were ready to co-operate with the Dictator. Very quietly a small band, under Major Missori, left Sicily one dark night, and before daybreak landed on the Italian coast near Scylla. They made their way into the mountains, spreading everywhere the fires of insurrection, and by their manœuvres persuading the Neapolitan troops who were out to arrest them, that the whole population of Sicily had landed armed to the teeth, with Garibaldi at their head. The news reached the unfortunate king, who sent to offer Garibaldi fifty million francs, and the whole Neapolitan navy to take Venice with, if he would consent to stop the invasion. An attempt to arrest the earth's motion might have been more successful.

On the 18th of August, Garibaldi embarked, with four thousand men, for the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. The Neapolitan fleet was hovering about the coast; but he succeeded in landing most of his troops on that solitary part of the coast where the mountains of Aspromonte run down abruptly to the sea. As the last men were landing, the enemy came down upon them, seized their ships, cutting them off from all hopes of retreat, and forcing them to retire into the mountains. The news of the capture of Reggio rapidly followed, and was borne to Naples on the wings of the wind. "Cæsar," in the words of Suetonius, "had landed, and had announced his arrival with a clap of thunder." There was no time to lose. On marched the little band, raising the villages through which they passed, until the cry of "Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel" flew from promontory to promontory along the Calabrian coast, and was echoed far inland.

On the 6th, at the news of Garibaldi's approach, the king fled from Naples, leaving it, however, strongly garrisoned with Neapolitan troops. On the 6th, Garibaldi received the following telegram from Liborio Romano, the ex-prime minister,—“To the invincible Dictator of the Two Sicilies. Naples expects you with anxiety, to confide to you her future destinies.”

On the 7th, Garibaldi announced his intention of entering Naples. He was now at Salerno, distant only a short railway journey from the capital. Leaving his troops there he advanced alone to take Naples. The storming of the capital was on this wise. At nine o'clock in the morning of the 7th, the general left Salerno in a special train of only four carriages. These contained some staff-officers, a few National Guards, and a few English amateurs. The train very soon had to stop—the vast populations of the Torre del Greco, Resina, and Portici turned out, covered the lines, climbed on the train, and even crowded the engine. Again the train began to move on slowly—the people running along the lines in a state of perfectly frantic excitement; and then, at a snail's pace, the carriages of the invading army approached Naples. Inside the station, by means of temporary barricades and a strong guard extem-

porised on the spot, some order was maintained. Outside, the scene baffled all power of description : horses and carriages, apparently piled on the top of each other, with masses of human beings piled on the top of them ; ladies covered with the Sardinian colours, on foot, on horseback, on donkeys, or crushed to pieces ; swarms of lazzarones with a bit of red somewhere ; gaping Neapolitan gendarmes and stupified national guards ; rival committees with rival flags inextricably mixed up together ; rival partisans and discordant shouts of "Viva Garibaldi !" "Viva Victor Emmanuel !" "Viva l'Italia !" all the din blended together with drums, trumpets, and a pandemonium of brass instruments, attempting Garibaldi's Hymn in a hundred different places ; and, as a kind of background to this turbulent scene, the Castello Nuovo and the Rhine fortresses, dark, silent, bristling with cannon, and crowded with sullen Neapolitan soldiers, who alone took no part in the festival of liberty, but prepared gloomily to point the cannon upon the principal streets, light the matches, and wait the word of command to fire. Such were some prominent characteristics of the scene outside. In the enclosure of the station four two-horse carriages were waiting. Majors Missori and Millo alone rode forward on horseback as rapidly as they could. Garibaldi and Cosenz followed in the first carriage amidst deafening shouts. As they came under the guns of the Castello Nuovo, the artillerymen pointed them, and then stood ready with the lighted match. At that supreme moment the general's voice was heard above the din—"Slower, slower!—drive slower !" And again, as the agitated driver hardly seemed to understand, with that voice not accustomed to command twice, "Slower !" Then, as the carriage nearly stopped under the muzzles of the enemy's guns, and the officers were now plainly heard exhorting the men to fire, the general stood upright in his carriage, with one hand on his breast, and looked steadfastly at the artillerymen. The fate of Italy trembled in the balance ; a silence seemed to fall on the excited crowd ; the suspense hardly lasted a minute. Three times the order to fire was repeated, and at the third the artillerymen flung down their matches, waved their caps wildly in the air, and shouted, "Viva Garibaldi !"

The general had won again.

H. R. HAWEIS.

(To be concluded in our next.)



THE BROWN BEQUEST.

To the Editor of the ARGOSY.

SIR,—The following sketch of himself and of his ways was found in the repositories of the late Joseph Brown, of Goldsworthall, Esquire, by his executors after his death. Looking to the weight which must attach to its intrinsically excellent maxims, as coming from one who rose solely by his own splendid talents, we venture to hope that the sketch may prove useful to those who have their “way to make,” while we think it cannot fail to interest all. In Mr. Brown our town has lost one of its most useful and most loved members. He was hardly ever known to lose his temper, which was habitually cheerful and serene. The trials of his domestic life he bore with Christian resignation. I have heard him called selfish and worldly, simply because he steadily refused to help men or schemes which did not in the first place show that they could help themselves. On the other hand, when practical talent had once fairly shown itself, no one was more ready to lend a helping hand. He never gave money it is true; and those who did not like him, have said that in the help which he gave to others he had at all times a long eye to his own interest; but where actions are on the face of them kind and honourable, it is surely unfair to go in search of selfish motives. Otherwise, who among us shall stand the ordeal?

Mr. Brown died on 22nd June last, at the great age of eighty-five. A profound believer in the doctrine of the famous Adam Smith, that the real benefactor of his species is the man who accumulates money, and not he who spends it, he, all his life, steadily denied himself the gratification of being what is called “liberal to his relations.” His views were large, and he thought it better and wiser to add to the public prosperity than to squander his means in attempting to diffuse a temporary and irrational happiness in the narrow sphere of private life. Magnanimously setting aside the dictates of private feeling, he bequeathed the whole of his ample means and estate for the endowment of an hospital in Sillerton, for the education of boys of the name of Brown; a preference, as is reasonable and natural, being in terms of the bequest, to be given to *Joseph Browns*. We are spending fifty thousand pounds on the building. When finished it will afford ample accommodation for nineteen boys, and will form a lasting monument of the success and noble generosity of its founder. We purpose to exhibit in a glass case in the great entrance hall of the institution, the original ragged coat with which the founder came to Sillerton, in March, 1794.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

An Executor of the late JOSEPH BROWN,
of Goldsworthall, Esquire.

13 *Gt. George-street, Sillerton, 1st July, 1866.*

One day, early in my fifteenth year, I found myself in the High Street of Sillerton, with a very ragged coat to my back, and possessed of a capital of

twopence. I did not know a soul in the town. Half a century has passed over my head since that day. I have now a professional business worth three thousand a year. My estate of Goldsworthall now yields me fifteen hundred a year; and I have one or two other little investments not altogether to be despised. I am chief magistrate of Sillerton, a town which has upwards of fifty thousand inhabitants. I am, I say, a professional man, and my success, such as it is, has not been achieved by lucky speculation like that of many who succeed in trade. I have run no risks. I have worked my way slowly up the hill, step by step; and my own success has as much astonished me, as their own want of it has, I see, astonished many of those who began life in advance of me. As I have always observed that to disclose the secret machinery of success acts somehow as an anodyne to the sting of failure, I now purpose to afford this compensation to those to whom I can see that my better fortune has been the cause of some jealousy and heart-burning.

The causes of fame, one of your literary men says, are obvious, while those of fortune are hidden. Hidden, I suppose they are, from foolish, unpractical, men; but really they are not very difficult to discover by a man of plain common sense, who is not blinded by self-conceit.

When seventeen, I was promoted from message boy to be clerk in the office of one of the leading attorneys in Sillerton. My salary for three years was thirty pounds, and I lived on five-and-twenty. I am not, however, going to take up time with an account of how I fought with poverty, or of how I made myself a sound lawyer by studying while others were smoking or sleeping. I have known many men who were as diligent as I was, but who have stuck in the mud nevertheless. You will hardly make your way in business without being industrious, and without knowing your business—and these qualifications, so far as I have seen, are ordinarily quite sufficient to keep a business which has been made for you, but not to make one.

I saw this very early in life; yet I was not what is called a clever fellow, and luckily I never thought I was. My fellow clerk, Sam, could write a business letter in a quarter the time it took me. Then, Sam's letter was neat, sharp, and to the point, while mine was hardly respectable grammar. Conceive then the astonishment of Sam, of myself, and of the whole office, when the situation of corresponding clerk—the most dignified and best paid in the office—was given to me. I could not understand it at that time, but subsequently the mystery was made plain to me. Two of those above me had a mark against them for immoral conduct, while the temperament of my friend Sam was not a business one. He had an irresistible tendency, both in speech and correspondence, to let men see what he thought of them. My own letters, I can see on looking back, never fell into this error, and so never got our master into hot water. So long as we gained our point, and did what was fair ourselves, where was the use of letting one man see that you thought him silly, and another that you thought him dishonest? I took precious good care to see as far as other people, but I took, if possible, greater care that nobody should see how much I saw. My cue was always to make a man, if possible, well pleased with himself, and at the same time to make him *feel* that he could not get the better of me.

Then I was always good-humoured. I was not going to let a man cut me because he had done me an injury—nor, on the other hand, was I going to cut him because I saw that he suspected that I had done him one. While I strove, and I believe with success, to be good-humoured and pleasant to every one, I avoided excessive intimacy with any one—having observed that this is almost always the prelude to a quarrel—first comes hot weather, then a thunder-storm, and then cold. I never was “confidential,” as it is called, with any one. Was anybody ever so, without repenting of it?

I had a hard fight too, and I was on the other side of thirty, before I saw my way to being anything more than a clerk. I saw a good many men get a step or two in advance of me, through luck, but I never consumed my energy in jealous fretting on this account. Nature gave me a good digestion, and I took the affairs of life coolly and with good temper. My chance would come—and even if it did not, though I desired fortune, I was frugal and could enjoy life without it. An uncle of Sam’s, I remember, who had much in his power, passed him over in a good appointment. The cause was plain. The young man to whom he gave it was the son of a man from whom the uncle expected something. Could anything have been more reasonable and natural? Yet what did the silly Sam do? He wrote an angry letter to his uncle, full of bosh about “conduct to his own brother’s son—the brother who had helped him so generously when he was poor,” &c. Now how can men expect the world to reward them if they won’t adapt themselves to it? Do they think that it is going out of its daily path to meet their notions of justice and generosity? No good, it was plain to me, could ever come of being out of humour with any one, and I hardly ever felt the inclination. If a man tried to cheat me I didn’t allow him, but I felt no anger with him. Men pursued their own interests, I pursued mine. I endeavoured by good-humour, knowledge of business, and attention, and by scrupulous conformity to the usages of society, to merit the reward which society has to give; and by patience I got it.

I soon saw that of all things to be avoided by those who have their position to make is the affectation of conventional non-conformity. Who but an ass, Sam used to say, would mind your wearing a cap instead of a hat, if you find a cap more comfortable; and then Sam would glance with contempt at my well-brushed beaver, and at my neat black kid gloves, which I always wore when I had got as far up in the world as to justify the expense. But, ha, ha! Sam, my boy, I used to think, let those laugh who win. I never troubled my head much with what the world *ought* to think; I was not clever enough to put it right, and what it *did* think always seemed to me much the more important point.

Nature, I admit, has given me some outward advantages for getting on. Of these I have carefully made the most. I am tall and broad-chested, with grey hair standing erect upon an ample and commanding-looking forehead. My “presence,” I have often observed, in the bank of which I am manager is sufficient to bring guilt and confusion into the face of the man who brings me a doubtful bill for discount, while the heartiness of my laugh—the style of one’s laughter is a point to be carefully attended to—and the cordial way

in which I can shake hands when I choose, has brought many a strong man's account to the bank. I have always been most attentive to dress—and my costume has been nearly the same for twenty years. I wear a black frock-coat, waistcoat of the same material, with dark-grey trousers. Since I was made manager of the bank I have carried a gold-headed cane, with which I walk to and from the office. On the same occasion I bought a gold repeater watch, which I wear with gold seals, in the good old fashion. I must say that I laid aside my old silver turnip with regret; it had kept me true to many a business engagement in the days of youthful struggle.

I know of nothing which argues more against a man being possessed of a prudent business-like spirit, and is therefore more calculated to tell against his business prospects, than marrying on an insufficient or precarious income; but, on the other hand, when he has a certain and sufficient income and has reached a becoming period of life, there can be no doubt that a prudent and sensible marriage adds to his weight and respectability.

As for myself, I felt the gravity of marriage to be so great that I had been in a position to marry for some years before I could fairly make up my mind to it; but when I got the bank, I began to see distinctly that the inferior social status of a single man was altogether inappropriate and unbecoming to my position.

In choosing a wife I was guided just by the same principles which have guided me in the other affairs of life, and which have led me, not altogether discredibly, I venture to hope. If I did not marry for love, as it is called, at least I did not tire of my wife at the end of three months. If I did not tell her before we were married that she was an angel, I was never uncivil to her afterwards.

I chose my wife because, having known her for several years, she appeared to be prudent, sensible, and economical, and likely to manage my house creditably; and on the whole my expectations were reasonably well fulfilled. I may add that she was good-looking, which I frankly confess that I regard as an advantage in a woman. We were not blessed with any family; and when she was called away from me last year I did feel very queer and lonely. But when two agree to journey through life together, it is plain that one must die first. I dedicated such an amount of time to grief as the world has seen fit to require and sanction; but I did not allow myself to sink into a morbid and sentimental condition. The period of legitimate grief having expired, I resumed my attention to business, and I am not ashamed to say that I was able to resume my interest in it.

There are, I think, few common habits more fatal to business reputation than a habit of chattering. When I hear a young man starting in life ready to deliver his opinion at a moment's notice on the questions of the day, I mark him as one whom I shall certainly not be the first to send business to. No man should presume to engage the attention of the company by talk, unless his age and position are markedly superior. No unmade man should ever talk to the company. I feel that I cannot give too great weight to this important truth. By talking, you not only allow others to take note of your vanities and weaknesses—and we all have our share, only some are cleverer in hiding them than others—but by the mere fact of talking, you affront men of age and

position, and thus make them indisposed to help you. They think, and think rightly, that it is for age to talk, and for youth to listen. But even among those of your own standing, young man with your way to make, be advised.—Nature has given you two ears; keep both fully employed. You have but one tongue; let it enjoy plenty of leisure.

If conformity in details be desirable for those who wish to do well in the world, it is strictly indispensable in matters intrinsically important. For any one to talk irreverently of, or conduct himself with levity towards, any institution of church or state, is what I have never been able to tolerate; and it is a style of conduct which, I am glad to say, society is certain to visit with its severest displeasure. Busy as we used to be in the office all the week when I was a young man, I rejoice to say that I never was once wilfully absent from church, either forenoon or afternoon; and, higher considerations apart, I may say that I know of no better way for a young man to show that he possesses a steady and tractable spirit, deserving advancement and encouragement, than by regular attendance at church. Nor do I know anything which tells more, or tells more justly, against a young man's prospects in business than neglect of the ordinances of religion.

I have said that I cultivated silence in company, yet I took care not to be morosely taciturn. I listened with deference and interest to the conversation of my elders and social superiors, and was always ready to laugh at a joke, provided it was proper and harmless. And when my age and position became such as to call on me to lead the conversation, I could amuse the young fellows, too, with harmless tale and anecdote. What I have always avoided, both as junior and senior, was the delivery of views and opinions. I never in my recollection said a word to the prejudice of any one, or ever said a word which could hurt the feelings or prejudices of any respectable member of society. My aim was always to impress those whom I met with a feeling that I was a sound, cautious, good-tempered, man of business, and of *business aims*.

If I have a taste for anything besides business, it is what I believe no man ever suspected. I am fond of horses; and what is more, I am a good judge of a horse. But no one ever heard me talk of horses. Even since my success in business became decided, I have not indulged myself in keeping a horse. The young man who wants to succeed, will do well to follow my example. If he allows himself even to talk about any amusement for which he may have a taste, it is astonishing how soon he may have a reputation fixed upon him for being knowing in it. He will have plenty of rivals, eager to talk of him as a good shot, a good fisher, knowing in horses—being well aware that such a reputation is certain to be most injurious, probably fatal, to his business prospects. When a young man, I was a member of a debating society in our town. I never spoke except when the business of the society was concerned. My reason for being a member was that a good many men of influence belonged to it, with whom I had thus an opportunity of becoming acquainted. My friend Sam was a distinguished member; and I recollect going to his lodgings one night out of curiosity, when he had a meeting of his choicest friends. They were drinking *toddy*—a composition which I hate; indeed I

hate all spirits; and as to smoking, it is a method of employing time which has always seemed to me suitable only for those of weak intellect. I was prevailed on, I remember, to try a pipe—faugh!—It was the first time and the last. They tried to encourage me to “persevere,” by holding out the prospect that by so doing I should become a smoker in time. Dare say I might have succeeded in making myself a slave to an expensive and idiotic habit had I chosen; but that I should, by learning to smoke, be putting down the smallest item to the credit of my account with Fortune, was what I could not see; much less did I see that any balance was thereby likely to accrue to *Profit*. I thought it as well to reserve my perseverance for somewhat different objects. So much, I suppose, for not being clever. But the talk was the wonderful thing.—“What was love?”—“Did men act from free will or from necessity?” and I fancy that they drank whisky-and-water, smoked their vile tobacco, and muddled the small modicum of brains which God had given them, two or three nights a week in this way. If there is anything for which from my boyhood I have found it difficult to hide my contempt, it is a man occupying himself with poetry, metaphysics, and such stuff, instead of giving himself to the honest and obvious work of life, and pocketing the honest payment for it. I well remember how my clothes smelt of tobacco next morning, and what a fright I was in lest our master should notice this. I was, however, at the office as usual half-an-hour before regulation time, and I can remember that I got a job to do which would have fallen to Sam had he been there in time. It put half a sovereign in my pocket—a sum not to be despised in those days.

Now I do not mean to say, in giving the above sketch of my own animus, that men have not arrived at fortune whose mental machinery would, if dissected, show a very different arrangement of wheels and pivots. Sheer audacity will sometimes do wonders, especially in public life. Yet I think my own plan has been about as sure and as easy a one as can be followed. If I were to name one advantage of mind which I have had over other men, I should say it is this—I was a sensible fellow *as a young man*. By reason of pride, conceit, or being over-ambitious, you will often see a man between his twentieth and twenty-fifth year commit an error which he never has a chance of retrieving. Opportunity gone is gone for ever. He is thrown off the line—shunted—so to speak, and the rest of life is embittered, not only by the consciousness of failure, but by the consciousness that he has only his own vanity to blame for the failure. Generally I have noticed that the causes of a man's failure are distinctly visible to every one but himself. I have known men with capital business heads, and with all the inclination to work, the mystery of whose lives—inscrutable to, and undreamt of by, themselves—lay in their manner; shy, retiring fellows, who never make acquaintances, but allow any man to cultivate them; hence their tendency is inevitably downwards in the social scale. A shy man, whose mental cuticle is so tender that the blood comes at every scratch, may perhaps succeed as a clergyman, or as a doctor, or chance may put him in a safe business position, but to push his way through the rough and thorny brushwood which besets the outset of a business career, is what he need never try.

Know your business, scrupulously respect the world's conventionalities, face it boldly, receive its kicks and its cuffs—of which you will have a good allowance at starting—with invincible patience and good-humour, and it will come round to you in time. But it is a coy mistress, and one with many lovers. Unless you woo with perfect self-mastery, and with knowledge of its ways, your suit will not prosper.

JOSEPH BROWN.

Goldsworthall, Nov., 1845.



AN EASTERN LOVE-STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR JACOB," ETC., ETC.

PART I.

THE first years of my married life were spent in a beautiful Moorish city on the Mediterranean, where I gained a respectable livelihood as judiciary interpreter. So fond was I of Arabic and of the Arabs in those days, that the only marvel is I did not return to Europe a good Mahometan and the husband of two or three wives. But I never changed either my religion or my habits of living, except in those outward matters which are as easily laid aside as one's clothes.

We lived in the prettiest little Moorish house in the world, having a court open to the sky, with a light gallery running round, and a fountain overhung by banana trees in the midst. The walls were white as snow, and the pavements of tiles painted with all sorts of flowers and arabesques, and the sitting-rooms were furnished with divans and carpets from Tunis, and gay lamps surmounted by silver crescents. We had a nice, good-tempered negress, named Zerah, to cook for us, and a pretty little Arab boy named Alix to run on errands. What more could any reasonable people desire? The only drawback to my wife's happiness was that my daily attendance at the court of assize left her much alone. I therefore tried my utmost to find some pleasant people with whom she could spend her time, whether French or Arab. Of course this task had little difficulty about it. My wife's sweet face and gracious ways soon endeared her to all those whose affection we cared for, and by-and-by she became as enthusiastic a lover of the Arabs as myself.

Our kindest and most intimate friends were the family of a rich, cultivated, and most amiable Arab gentleman, whom I will call Sidi Hanan ben-Abdmahman. Of his wife I feel hardly able to speak, since after an intercourse of years my only recollection of her is a pair of black eyes peering over a white muslin veil, and a shake of fat friendly fingers deeply dyed with henna. But the children were charming, especially Hanyfa, whom I knew from the time she ran about unveiled, a dark-eyed lively little sprite of five years, till she became the bride of my young friend, Ahmed ben-Zontia.

Hanyfa was just fourteen when I brought my wife from her quiet home in Brittany to the unchanged land of the Thousand and One Nights. Of a transparent, pearly complexion, with soft, dark, almond-shaped eyes, and a mouth of wonderful sweetness, this young Moorish girl seemed to us like

some beautiful princess of whom Scheherazade had told us in our childhood. Of course I seldom saw her in those days, and seldom still unveiled; but a European, especially a European of five-and-thirty, is considered a different order of animal altogether from a marriageable young Moor of fifteen, and, I daresay, I knew Hanyfa's features better than any man related to her except her father and brothers. How often, ah, how often, when talking to Sidi Hanan or his sons, a sound of musical, girlish laughter has come across the open court, and, looking up, I have caught glimpses of a dainty little fairy dressed in crimson brocade and white gauze, playing with her little negress or feeding her gold-fishes!

Hanyfa's brothers were handsome boys of all ages, who learned French of me, besides receiving a comprehensive and polished education at the public Arab school in the city. They spoke French with singular purity of accent, and delighted in the books my wife lent them from time to time, such as the stories of Emile Souvestre and Lamartine. The elder, Omar, a graceful youth of sixteen, was soon to be sent to Paris to study for the bar, and the younger ones were alike growing up with ambitions to see the world and make men of themselves. Nothing could be a prettier sight than to see Sidi Hanan surrounded by his boys. They always stood in his presence, though each talked quite unrestrainedly, from Omar down to little Mustapha, who was still in the nursery, and whose little dimpled hands and feet were dyed with henna.

We had been settled in our little Moorish home about six months when rumours of Hanyfa's approaching marriage reached our ears; my wife was soon informed of this by Madame Hanan herself, who not only invited her to the wedding, but graciously permitted her to see the preparations for it. If a French or English wedding is a terrible affair, what will be said to a Moorish one? Marie, my wife, who liked weddings and all kinds of rejoicings in general, came home more than once in tears at the martyrdom poor little Hanyfa had to undergo.

"Would you believe it?" she said, on the eve of the wedding, "for two whole days Hanyfa has had to sit like a statue, dressed up till, what with chains, silk, paper, and paint, you can hardly see her eyes, and she won't be out of purgatory till to-morrow evening. I wonder Sidi Hanan allows it!"

"You forget that Sidi Hanan only does as all the world does, my dear; Hanyfa doesn't consider herself a martyr, depend on it."

"Oh, she does, though. She owned to me yesterday that she had much rather see her betrothed before marrying him, though she has perfect trust in her father's choice."

The next day the wedding took place, and late in the evening Marie and her negress came home, the former laden with sweetmeats and cakes, and deafened with the music that had attended the ceremony. She had herself danced, and was thoroughly tired, though not too tired to tell me the particulars of the day from beginning to end, dwelling, most woman-like, on the toilettes of the ladies.

Alas! by reason of my sex I was not fated to witness that gorgeous pageantry Marie described so well, otherwise I could better tell how the ladies of the family arraved themselves in vests of crimson and purple silk heavy

with gold lace, in garments of linen finer than gossamer, in slippers of pink and yellow kid, embroidered with silver, in necklaces and bracelets of gold, of amber, and of all sorts of jewels, and how they feasted and danced together, and how the bride walked to her apartments, attended by her mother and friends and a band of music, and how the bride and bridegroom drank water from each other's palms, and were solemnly united in the name of Allah. All these things are nothing written down, but seen in a Moorish house exquisitely proportioned and fitted up, and under a brilliant southern sky, turn at once into another story added in later times to the Thousand and One.

The marriage promised to be a very happy one. The girl-wife and her boy-husband were to live with Sidi Hanan for the present, who seemed as if life had no more to give. Hanyfa had ever been the apple of his eye, the crowning joy of his existence; and having chosen for her a husband in whom he was entirely satisfied, he owned to me that he had hardly a wish. "That sweet child," he said, "is the only girl ever born to me, and has never caused either her mother or me a pang. If I had not loved Ahmed as my own son I should never have taken him into my family."

Ahmed became my pupil for French also, and I soon grew deeply interested in him. He was of a sweet disposition, thoughtful, sensitive, and as cosmopolitan in his tastes and habits as his father-in-law. Now and then he would shyly mention his wife, and then nothing could exceed the chivalrous tenderness of his look and manner. I shall never forget the reproof he administered in my presence to a flippant Spaniard who had come to see me on business during Ahmed's lesson. This man, like a great many other Europeans, seemed to find pleasure in twitting the first Mahometan he met with polygamy, and asked Ahmed when he was going to marry again. The young man's face flushed from cheek to brow, but he replied with perfect composure, "Nay, sir, I have not asked you if you have remained faithful to your own wife."

Marie saw the other side of the picture and reported it to be equally fair and good. Hanyfa was but a mere child—how could it be otherwise, seeing that she had received no sort of education—but she was a child of infinite gifts and graces. And she was perfectly naïve and genuine, telling Marie that her husband was good to her, and that he found her pretty and just the wife after his own heart. Sometimes my wife found Ahmed at home, and would then report some such conversation as this:—

"Oh, daughter of Hanan," Ahmed would say, "do not go to the bath this morning, for the sirocco is blowing and the streets are like furnaces, and even the negresses cover their faces as they go along."

"I will not go to the bath, oh, son of my uncle! since the sirocco is blowing and the streets are like furnaces and the negresses cover their faces, but I will stay with my mother and her women, who are busy preparing quinces."

Or he would preface a speech thus—"In the name of Allah, oh, daughter of Hanan—" to which she would reply, "What you say is right, oh, son of Abd-el-Zontia." And Marie, who, you must remember, was a lively young Frenchwoman, quick at repartee, could not help being amused at the circumlocutions and tirades in which they indulged. It is well known that

the Arabs, however finely gifted and quick of perception, are somewhat long-winded in conversation, and Ahmed's intellectual capacities were not to be measured by the standard of his talk with his wife.

Loving, intelligent, and gentle as she was, the imperfection of her education cut Hanyfa off from any but domestic sympathy with her husband; and whilst no one could talk in a freer and livelier strain with other people, necessity compelled him to be dull to her. Yet they loved each other and were happy. Her character was undoubtedly influenced by his, and Marie assured me that she was capable of earnest words and by no means the fairy-like princess I imagined her. Pretty, pretty, Hanyfa! as I think of her and her young husband in their Eastern home, her story seems a fairy tale indeed, of which I have dreamed only!

PART II.

A FEW months after the marriage of Hanyfa and Ahmed, I was sent to a small town on the coast, two hundred miles off. It was not without regret that we steamed out of the beautiful bay we had grown to love so well; and as the white domes and minarets of the Moorish city faded from our eyes, Marie grew quite sad. We were going amongst strangers, she said, and farther than ever from our beloved France; how unlikely it was that we should find such abundance of friends, such pretty apartments, such nice bazaars, such cheap provisions in the little out-of-the-way town whither we were bound.

But consolations soon came in the shape of some very pleasant French people—officers and their wives—who went with us all the way, and became our neighbours when we settled down in our destination. It was now summer time. The sea and the hills lying along the coast were veiled in a heavy copperish mist. The sirocco blew from time to time like a fiery blast. Every speck of verdure was withered as if by fire, and the chief business and pleasure of life was to keep oneself cool.

Spite of the heat, however, and the monotony of life and scenery engendered by it, we found our appointed three months very quickly come to an end. As our ship glided back into the harbour we had left with such regret a short time since, we could hardly believe that a season had come and gone since then. We talked of Hanyfa and Ahmed as we walked on deck, and of other friends, for whom we had bought some trifle by way of souvenir—a quaint scarf, a pair of slippers, a basket of pomegranates, or a bit of embroidery.

For Sidi Hanan I had bought a curious and costly ivory pen, embellished with crescents and stars in colour and gold. I knew him to be a dexterous writer (for writing Arabic is almost as much of an art as drawing) and dainty in his tools and materials. However, I gladly indulged in a little extravagance to give him pleasure, for not only had he showed me many useful kindnesses, but he had testified a personal affection, which I valued far more. The day after our instalment at home, we set out for Sidi Hanan's house.

"We shall find everybody and everything as we left them," I said, as we approached the house. "People live slowly out of Europe."

We found the street door partly opened, the outer court empty; so climbing the narrow stone staircase, we entered the beautiful inner court unan-

nounced. All was unchanged. The fountain rippled in the sunshine; Hanyfa's gold and silver fishes danced hither and thither; the orange-trees were loaded with fruit and flowers; and little Mustapha played boisterously with a young negress outside his mother's apartment. The child seemed to have forgotten us, and hid his head shyly behind his nurse's apron, at which Marie playfully imitated him, hiding her head behind me. Then little Mustapha laughed aloud, and was himself again. Marie kissed him, asking impatiently, "Where is Hanyfa? Where is Hanyfa?" but being thus interrogated, the boy burst out crying, and ran away.

The child's action, and the unwonted silence of the house, struck me with sudden apprehension. I turned to the nurse, about to interrogate her, when a well-known voice uttered my name, and looking up, I beheld Sidi Hanan.

It was he, my dear friend and kind patron; but oh, how changed! His fine form was bent as if under the weight of some insupportable trouble. His noble brow was troubled, his lips trembled, so that they could hardly frame a word.

"Salamalek" (blessing be on you), he said; then having raised his right hand to his lips, held it out to us both, and invited us to take coffee in his room. We sat down, longing to ask after Hanyfa, yet lacking the courage. At last I said in Arabic, for I always find that if you want a man's confidence you must use his language as a key to it, "Oh, sir, is it well with your house and your family?"

"It is well," he said.

Marie, who did not understand the Scriptural signification of this phrase in the mouth of a Mussulman, at once jumped to joyful conclusions, and began talking of Hanyfa. Where was she? Where was Ahmed? and a dozen more questions were on her lips, when I plucked her sleeve.

Two large tears gathered in Sidi Hanan's eyes, and rolled down his pale cheeks. "Hanyfa is dead," he said; "my child is dead. The will of Allah be fulfilled. He is the powerful and the compassionate." His resignation overwhelmed us, and we sat by, unable to proffer a word of sympathy. Marie hid her face in her hands and wept. I turned aside to hide my own emotion.

Our host looked kindly at us, but gave no other signs of grief, and when coffee was brought up, served us with his usual grace and hospitality. By-and-by he related what had happened to turn this happy home into a house of desolation and mourning. Hanyfa had become a mother, and all was peace and promise, when an accession of fever set in and both mother and child were carried off in a day. Just as the sorrowful narrative was completed, the young widower came in. He looked very sad—heartbroken almost—but told his griefs, and received our expressions of sympathy in the same quiet way his father-in-law had done.

Afterwards, when we were alone together, he told me how, in the first days of his desolation, he had beaten his heart, torn his hair, and raved like a madman, neither taking sleep, nor food, nor drink. "But now," he added, with a sigh, "I have resigned myself to the will of Allah. It was fated to be so."

Another time he said, "I shall of course marry again, but never shall I love a woman as I loved Hanyfa. She was the wife of my youth, and we entered upon the spring-tide of life hand in hand. There is no sundering such ties."

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"BELL FROM THE NORTH."

Every Friday, the Mussulman Sabbath, Madame Hanan goes to the cemetery where her daughter lies buried: taking with her her sisters, her friends, and her maids. They sit beneath the palm-tree that shelters Hanyfa's grave from the sun, and weep and wail together. The mother calls upon the dead with heartrending cries of desolation. "Oh, my child, my Hanyfa, why did you leave me?" Marie has heard her say, "Was I not kind to you? Did not I give you all you wanted? Did I not love you better than all my children? Speak to me, my beautiful, my beloved; I am listening for the sound of your voice." And she bends down as if indeed her mother's grief could compel the grave to utter a sign, and Love to break like a star from the darkness of Death.

There is no more beautiful spot anywhere than this same Moorish cemetery, with its white mosque rising from the golden shadows of palm-trees, and its green slopes bending to a bright blue sea. How often Marie and I talk of it now, and of the happy wishes buried there, as we sit in our little garden in Brittany, where nothing reminds us of our Eastern home but a tiny green blade growing in a Moorish water-jar!

It is a date palm, and we watch it as tenderly as if like ourselves it remembered and mourned the Golden East and the friends we had left behind, and the brief bright life of enchantment, vanished for ever.

A LONDON LYRIC.

BELL from the North hath journey'd hither,
 She brings the scent of heather with her,
 To show in what sweet glens she grew,—
 Where'er she trips in any weather,
 She steps as if she trod on heather,
 And leaves a sense like dropping dew.

The mountains own her for their daughter,
 Her presence feels like running water
 Cool'd from the sun in a green glade:
 So strange she seems to city seeing,—
 A playmate of the winds, a being
 Made of the dew and mountain shade.

In the strange street she stops to listen,
 Her red lips part, her blue eyes glisten,
 Wild windy voices round her speak;
 She sees the streets roll dark and clouded,
 Fearless as when she paused enshrouded
 By mists upon a mountain peak.

And oft, while wondrous-eyed she wanders,
 She meets a sweet face, pauses, ponders,
 And then peers backward as she goes,—
 As, in the far-off solemn places,
 She drooped the tenderest of faces
 Over some tender thing that grows.

Long have the clouds and winds been by her,
 Long have the waters murmur'd nigh her,
 And sweet delight in those hath she ;
 Long has she watch'd the shapes of wonder
 Darken around with crying thunder,
 Yet all have used her tenderlie.

Yea, she hath been a frail flow'r lying
 Under the peak where storms were crying,
 Feeling the hills quake through and through,
 And, when the storm was ended, raising
 A little dewy head and gazing
 With pensive pleasure up the blue.

Yea, then the tameless Lightning often
 Watch'd her with eyes that seemed to soften,
 And smiled, and fled, and smiled again,
 Till, all around her gentler growing,
 She felt the moist winds blowing, blowing,
 While shafts of cool light drank the rain.

When mighty shapes had love and pity,
 What should appal her in the city ?
 What should she fear in sun or shower ?
 The cloud of life is pleasure-laden,—
 She fears it not,—she is a maiden
 Familiar with the things of power.

She is as sweet as maidens may be,
 Yet does not seem as things of clay be,
 But seemeth as she passes by
 The shadow of a spirit-lady
 (A wool-white cloud with image shady)
 Floating above her in the sky !

Yet is she made in mortal fashion,—
 A thing of pureness and of passion,
 A winning thing of eyes and lips,
 A maiden with a cheek to sigh on,
 A waist to clasp, a heart to die on,—
 Kiss-worthy to the finger-tips !

No pantaloons, no simpering sinner,
No little man of straw, shall win her,
 No scented darling of the sun;
But he who wins must win in honour,
And stir her soul, and breathe upon her
 Ev'n as the shapes of power have done.

And such a one his plaint should utter
Where the torn wings of tempests flutter,
 Where waters stir and winds are loud;
Or in the dark mysterious city,
When she is stirred to human pity
 In the windy motion of the cloud.

Bell from the North,—how shall I win her?
Wind, cloud, shade, water, dwell within her,
 And she like those is meek and strong.
How shall I weave, O mountain daughter,
A song of wind, cloud, shade, and water?
 How make thee mine with such a song?

Lo! here the things of power are meaner,
The flowers around our feet uncleaner,
 Than where her vagrant footsteps climb,
And here we prize ignoble thinking,
And here sit latter rhymesters, drinking
 The muddy lees of ancient rhyme.

And ah! the singing must be mournful,—
Strong things are tender, sweet things scornful,
 And the fresh breath of faith grows foul;
While where she roams strong things are tender,
Great things are grand things,—sounds of splendour
 Drown the dull whooting of the owl.

The life-cloud round me thunders, lightens,
Strong without gentleness, it frightens
 The timid Soul to grovelling deeds;
And when the brave Soul, hating error,
Upbraids the many-headed Terror,
 It smites him down,—and no man heeds.

If, ere the song be uttered duly,
I who have served her long and truly
 Should faint and fall, tho' strong and brave,
Last I will pay in loving duty
That Bell will come with all her beauty
 To look a little on my grave.

And she will come (while up above her
 The spirit-lady still will hover,
 Pausing a space with white wings furled),
 Her foot will rest, her eyes look nor'ward,—
 And that one grave will be thenceforward
 The sweetest grave in all the world.

And surely when she wanders thither,
 The scent of heather will be with her,
 The shady peace of mountains blue,
 And she will breathe like fresh winds blowing,
 And glide away like water flowing,
 And leave a sense like dropping dew.

ROBERT BUCHANAN.



THE MISFORTUNES OF FREDERIC PICKERING.

THERE was something almost grand in the rash courage with which Fred Pickering married his young wife, and something quite grand in her devotion in marrying him. She had not a penny in the world, and he, when he married her, had two hundred and fifty pounds,—and no profession. She was the daughter of parents whom she had never seen, and had been brought up by the kindness of an aunt, who died when she was eighteen. Distant friends then told her that it was her duty to become a governess; but Fred Pickering intervened, and Mary Crofts became Mary Pickering when she was nineteen years old. Fred himself, our hero, was six years older, and should have known better and have conducted his affairs with more wisdom. His father had given him a good education, and had articed him to an attorney at Manchester. While at Manchester he had written three or four papers in different newspapers, and had succeeded in obtaining admission for a poem in the *Free Trader*, a Manchester monthly magazine which was expected to do great things as the literary production of Lancashire. These successes, joined, no doubt, to the natural bent of his disposition, turned him against the law; and when he was a little more than twenty-five, having then been four years in the office of the Manchester attorney, he told his father that he did not like the profession chosen for him, and that he must give it up. At that time he was engaged to marry Mary Crofts; but of this fact he did not tell his father. Mr. Pickering, who was a stern man,—one not given at any time to softnesses with his children,—when so informed by his son, simply asked him what were his plans. Fred replied that he looked forward to a literary career,—that he hoped to make literature his profession. His father assured him that he was a silly fool. Fred replied that on that subject he had an opinion of his own by which he intended to be guided. Old Pickering then declared that in such circumstances he should withdraw all pecuniary assistance; and young Pickering upon this wrote an ungracious

epistle, in which he expressed himself quite ready to take upon himself the burden of his own maintenance. There was one and only one further letter from his father, in which he told his son that the allowance made to him would be henceforth stopped. Then the correspondence between Fred and the Ex-governor, as Mary used to call him, was brought to a close.

Most unfortunately there died at this time an old maiden aunt, who left four hundred pounds a piece to twenty nephews and nieces, of whom Fred Pickering was one. The possession of this sum of money strengthened him in his rebellion against his father. Had he had nothing on which to begin, he might probably even yet have gone to the old house at home, and have had something of a fatted calf killed for him, in spite of the ungraciousness of his letter. As it was he was reliant on the resources which Fortune had sent to him, thinking that they would suffice till he had made his way to a beginning of earning money. He thought it all over for full half-an-hour, and then came to a decision. He would go to Mary,—his Mary,—to Mary who was about to enter the family of a very vulgar tradesman as governess to six young children with a salary of twenty-five pounds per annum, and ask her to join him in throwing all prudence to the wind. He did go to Mary; and Mary at last consented to be as imprudent as himself, and she consented without any of that confidence which animated him. She consented simply because he asked her to do so, knowing that she was doing a thing so rash that no father or mother would have permitted it.

"Fred," she had said, half laughing as she spoke, "I am afraid we shall starve if we do."

"Starving is bad," said Fred; "I quite admit that; but there are worse things than starving. For you to be a governess at Mrs. Boullem's is worse. For me to write lawyers' letters all full of lies is worse. Of course we may come to grief. I dare say we shall come to grief. Perhaps we shall suffer awfully,—be very hungry and very cold. I am quite willing to make the worst of it. Suppose that we die in the street! Even that,—the chance of that with the chance of success on the other side, is better than Mrs. Boullem's. It always seems to me that people are too much afraid of being starved."

"Something to eat and drink is comfortable," said Mary. "I don't say that it is essential."

"If you will dare the consequences with me, I will gladly dare them with you," said Fred, with a whole rhapsody of love in his eyes. Mary had not been proof against this. She had returned the rhapsody of his eyes with a glance of her own, and then, within six weeks of that time, they were married. There were some few things to be bought, some little bills to be paid, and then there was the fortnight of honeymooning among the Lakes in June. "You shall have that, though there were not another shot in the locker," Fred had said, when his bride that was to be had urged upon him the prudence of settling down into a small lodging the very day after their marriage. The fortnight of honeymooning among the Lakes was thoroughly enjoyed, almost without one fearful look into the future. Indeed Fred, as he would sit in the late evening on the side of a mountain, looking down upon the lakes, and watching the fleeting brightness of the clouds, with his arm round his loving wife's waist and her head upon

his shoulder, would declare that he was glad that he had nothing on which to depend except his own intellect and his own industry. "To make the score off his own bat; that should be a man's ambition, and it is that which Nature must have intended for a man. She could never have meant that we should be bolstered up, one by another, from generation to generation." "You shall make the score off your own bat," Mary had said to him. Though her own heart might give way a little as she thought, when alone, of the danger of the future, she was always brave before him. So she enjoyed the fortnight of her honeymooning, and when that was over set herself to her task with infinite courage. They went up to London in a third-class carriage, and, on their arrival there, went at once to lodgings which had been taken for them by a friend in Museum-street. Museum-street is not cheering by any special merits of its own; but lodgings there were found to be cheap, and it was near to the great library by means of which, and the treasures there to be found, young Pickering meant to make himself a famous man.

He had had his literary successes at Manchester, as has been already stated, but they had not been of a remunerative nature. He had never yet been paid for what he had written. He reaped, however, this reward, that the sub-editor of a Manchester newspaper gave him a letter to a gentleman connected with a London periodical, which might probably be of great service to him. It is at any rate a comfort to a man to know that he can do something towards a commencement of the work that he has in hand,—that there is a step forward which he can take. When Fred and Mary sat down to their tea and broiled ham on the first night, the letter of introduction was a great comfort to them, and much was said about it. The letter was addressed to Roderick Billings, Esq., Office of the *Lady Bird*, 99 Catherine-street, Strand. By ten o'clock on the following morning Fred Pickering was at the office of the *Lady Bird*, and there learned that Mr. Billings never came to the office, or almost never. He was on the staff of the paper, and the letter should be sent to him. So Fred Pickering returned to his wife; and as he was resolved that no time should be lost, he began a critical reading of *Paradise Lost*, with a note book and pencil beside him, on that very day.

They were four months in London, during which they never saw Mr. Billings or any one else connected with the publishing world, and these four months were very trying to Mrs. Pickering. The study of Milton did not go on with unremitting ardour. Fred was not exactly idle, but he changed from one pursuit to another, and did nothing worthy of note except a little account of his honeymooning tour in verse. In this poem the early loves of a young married couple were handled with much delicacy and some pathos of expression, so that Mary thought that her husband would assuredly drive Tennyson out of the field. But no real good had come from the poem by the end of the four months, and Fred Pickering had sometimes been very cross. Then he had insisted more than once or twice, more than four times or five times, on going to the theatre; and now at last his wife had felt compelled to say that she would not go there with him again. They had not means, she said, for such pleasures. He did not go without her, but sometimes of an evening he was very cross. The poem had been sent to Mr. Billings, with a

letter, and had not as yet been sent back. Three or four letters had been written to Mr. Billings, and one or two very short answers had been received. Mr. Billings had been out of town. "Of course all the world is out of town in September," said Fred; "what fools we were to think of beginning just at this time of the year!" Nevertheless he had urged plenty of reasons why the marriage should not be postponed till after June. On the first of November, however, they found that they had still a hundred and eighty pounds left. They looked their affairs in the face cheerfully, and Fred taking upon his own shoulders all the blame of their discomfiture up to the present moment, swore that he would never be cross with his darling Molly again. After that he went out with a letter of introduction from Mr. Billings to the sub-editor of a penny newspaper. He had never seen Mr. Billings; but Mr. Billings thus passed him on to another literary personage. Mr. Billings in his final very short note communicated to Fred his opinion that he would find "work on the penny daily press easier got."

For months Fred Pickering hung about the office of the *Morning Comet*. November went, and December, and January, and he was still hanging about the office of the *Daily Comet*. He did make his way to some acquaintance with certain persons on the staff of the *Comet*, who earned their bread, if not absolutely by literature, at least by some work cognate to literature. And when he was asked to sup with one Tom Wood on a night in January, he thought that he had really got his foot upon the threshold. When he returned home that night, or I should more properly say on the following morning, his wife hoped that many more such preliminary suppers might not be necessary for his success. At last he did get employment at the office of the *Daily Comet*. He attended there six nights a week, from ten at night till three in the morning, and for this he received twenty shillings a week. His work was almost altogether mechanical, and after three nights disgusted him greatly. But he stuck to it, telling himself that as the day was still left to him for work he might put up with drudgery during the night. That idea, however, of working day and night soon found itself to be a false one. Twelve o'clock usually found him still in bed. After his late breakfast he walked out with his wife, and then;—well, then he would either write a few verses or read a volume of an old novel.

"I must learn shorthand writing," he said to his wife, one morning when he came home.

"Well, dear, I have no doubt you would learn it very quickly."

"I don't know that; I should have begun younger. It's a thousand pities that we are not taught anything useful when we are at school. Of what use is Latin and Greek to me?"

"I heard you say once that it would be of great use to you some day."

"Ah, that was when I was dreaming of what will never come to pass; when I was thinking of literature as a high vocation." It had already come to him to make such acknowledgments as this. "I must think about mere bread now. If I could report I might, at any rate, gain a living. And there have been reporters who have risen high in the profession. Dickens was a reporter. I must learn, though I suppose it will cost me twenty pounds."

He paid his twenty pounds and did learn shorthand writing. And while he was so doing he found he might have learned just as well by teaching himself out of a book. During the period of his tuition in this art he quarrelled with his employers at the *Daily Comet*, who, as he declared, treated him with an indignity which he could not bear. "They want me to fetch and carry, and be a menial," he said to his wife. He thereupon threw up his employment there. "But now you will get an engagement as a reporter," his wife said. He hoped that he might get an engagement as a reporter; but, as he himself acknowledged, the world was all to begin again. He was at last employed, and made his first appearance at a meeting of discontented tidewaiters, who were anxious to petition Parliament for some improvement in their position. He worked very hard in his efforts to take down the words of the eloquent leading tidewaiter; whereas he could see that two other reporters near him did not work at all. And yet he failed. He struggled at this work for a month, and failed at last. "My hand is not made for it," he said to his wife, almost in an agony of despair. "It seems to me as though nothing would come within my reach." "My dear," she said, "a man who can write the *Braes of Birken*"—the *Braes of Birken* was the name of his poem on the joys of honeymooning—"must not be ashamed of himself because he cannot acquire a small mechanical skill." "I am ashamed of myself all the same," said Fred.

Early in April they looked their affairs in the face again, and found that they had still in hand something just over a hundred pounds. They had been in London nine months, and when they had first come up they had expressed to each other their joint conviction that they could live very comfortably on forty shillings a week. They had spent nearly double that over and beyond what he had earned, and after all they had not lived comfortably. They had a hundred pounds left on which they might exist for a year, putting aside all idea of comfort; and then;—and then would come that starving of which Fred had once spoken so gallantly, unless some employment could in the meantime be found for him. And, by the end of the year, the starving would have to be done by three,—a development of events on which he had not seemed to calculate when he told his dearest Mary that after all there were worse things in the world than starving.

But before the end of this month there came upon them a gleam of comfort, which might be cherished and fostered till it should become a whole midday sun of nourishing heat. His friend of the *Manchester Free Trader* had become the editor of the *Salford Reformer*, a new weekly paper which had been established with the view of satisfying certain literary and political wants which the public of Salford had long experienced, and among these wants was an adequate knowledge of what was going on in London. Fred Pickering was asked whether he would write the London letter, once a week, at twenty shillings a week. Write it! Ay, that he would. There was a whole heaven of joy in the idea. This was literary work. This was the sort of thing that he could do with absolute delight. To guide the public by his own wit and discernment, as it were from behind a mask,—to be the motive power and yet unseen,—this had ever been his ambition. For three days

he was in an ecstasy, and Mary was ecstatic with him. For the first time it was a joy to him that the baby was coming. A pound a week earned would of itself prolong their means of support for two years, and a pound a week so earned would surely bring other pounds. "I knew it was to be done," he said, in triumph, to his wife, "if one only had the courage to make the attempt." The morning of the fourth day somewhat damped his joy, for there came a long letter of instruction from the Salford editor, in which there were hints of certain difficulties. He was told in this letter that it would be well that he should belong to a London club. Such work as was now expected from him could hardly be done under favourable circumstances unless he did belong to a club. "But as everybody now-a-days does belong to a club, you will soon get over that difficulty." So said the editor. And then the editor in his instructions greatly curtailed that liberty of the pen which Fred specially wished to enjoy. He had anticipated that in his London letter he might give free reins to his own political convictions, which were of a very liberal nature, and therefore suitable to the *Salford Reformer*. And he had a theological bias of his own, by the putting forward of which in strong language among the youth of Salford, he had intended to do much towards the clearing away of prejudice and the emancipation of truth. But the editor told him that he should hardly touch politics at all in his London letter, and never lay a finger on religion. He was to tell the people of Salford what was coming out at the different theatres, how the Prince and Princess looked on horseback, whether the Thames embankment made proper progress, and he was to keep his ears especially open for matters of social interest, private or general. His style was to be easy and colloquial, and above all things he was to avoid being heavy, didactic, and profound. Then there was sent to him, as a model, a column and a half cut out from a certain well-known newspaper, in which the names of people were mentioned very freely. "If you can do that sort of thing," said the editor, "we shall get on together like a house on fire."

"It is a farrago of ill-natured gossip," he said, as he chucked the fragment over to his wife.

"But you are so clever, Fred," said his wife. "You can do it without the ill nature."

"I will do my best," he said; "but as for telling them about this woman and that, I cannot do it. In the first place where am I to learn it all?" Nevertheless, the London letter to the *Salford Reformer* was not abandoned. Four or five such letters were written, and four or five sovereigns were paid into his little exchequer in return for so much work. Alas! after the four or five there came a kindly-worded message from the editor to say that the articles did not suit. Nothing could be better than Pickering's language, and his ideas were manly and for the most part good. But the *Salford Reformer* did not want that sort of thing. The *Salford Reformer* felt that Fred Pickering was too good for the work required. Fred for twenty-four hours was broken-hearted. After that he was able to resolve that he would take the thing up in the right spirit. He wrote to the editor, saying that he thought that the editor was right. The London letter required was not exactly

within the compass of his ability. Then he enclosed a copy of the *Braes of Birken*, and expressed an opinion that perhaps that might suit a column in the *Salford Reformer*,—one of those columns which were furthest removed from the corner devoted to the London letter. The editor replied that he would publish the *Braes of Birken* if Pickering wished; but that they never paid for poetry. Anything being better than silence Pickering permitted the editor to publish the *Braes of Birken* in the gratuitous manner suggested.

At the end of June, when they had just been twelve months in London, Fred was altogether idle as far as any employment was concerned. There was no going to the theatre now; and it had come to that with him, in fear of his coming privations, that he would discuss within his own heart the expediency of taking this or that walk with reference to the effect it would have upon his shoes. In those days he strove to work hard, going on with his Milton and his note-book, and sitting for two or three hours a day over heavy volumes in the reading-room at the Museum. When he first resolved upon doing this there had come a difficulty as to the entrance. It was necessary that he should have permission to use the library, and for a while he had not known how to obtain it. Then he had written a letter to a certain gentleman well known in the literary world, an absolute stranger to him, but of whom he had heard a word or two among his newspaper acquaintances, and had asked this gentleman to give him, or to get for him, the permission needed. The gentleman having made certain inquiry, having sent for Pickering and seen him, had done as he was asked, and Fred was free of the library.

"What sort of a man is Mr. Wickham Webb?" Mary asked him, when he returned from the club at which, by Mr. Webb's appointment, the meeting had taken place.

"According to my ideas he is the only gentleman whom I have met since I have been in London," said Fred, who in these days was very bitter.

"Was he civil to you?"

"Very civil. He asked me what I was doing up in London, and I told him. He said that literature is the hardest profession in the world. I told him that I thought it was, but, at the same time, the most noble."

"What did he say to that?"

"He said that the nobler the task, it was always the more difficult; and that, as a rule, it was not well that men should attempt work too difficult for their hands because of its nobility."

"What did he mean by that, Fred?"

"I knew what he meant very well. He meant to tell me that I had better go and measure ribbons behind a counter; and I don't know but what he was right."

"But yet you liked him?"

"Why should I have disliked him for giving me good advice? I liked him because his manner was kind, and because he strove hard to say an unpleasant thing in the pleasantest words that he could use. Besides, it did me good to speak to a gentleman once again."

Throughout July not a shilling was earned, nor was there any prospect

of the earning of a shilling. People were then still in town, but in another fortnight London would have emptied itself of the rich and prosperous. So much Pickering had learned, little as he was qualified to write the London letter for the *Salford Reformer*. In the last autumn he had complained to his wife that circumstances had compelled him to begin at the wrong period of the year,—in the dull months when there was nobody in London who could help him. Now the dull months were coming round again, and he was as far as ever from any help. What was he to do? “You said that Mr. Webb was very civil,” suggested his wife; “could you not write to him and ask him to help us?” “He is a rich man, and that would be begging,” said Fred. “I would not ask him for money,” said Mary; “but perhaps he can tell you how you can get employment.” The letter to Mr. Webb was written, with many throes, and the destruction of much paper. Fred found it very difficult to choose words which should describe with sufficient force the extreme urgency of his position, but which should have no appearance of absolute begging. “I hope you will understand,” he said, in his last paragraph, “that what I want is simply work for which I may be paid, and that I do not care how hard I work, or how little I am paid, so that I and my wife may live. If I have taken an undue liberty in writing to you, I can only beg you to pardon my ignorance.”

This letter led to another interview between our hero and Mr. Wickham Webb. Mr. Webb sent his compliments and asked Mr. Pickering to come and breakfast with him. This kindness, though it produced some immediate pleasure, created fresh troubles. Mr. Wickham Webb lived in a grand house near Hyde Park, and poor Fred was badly off for good clothes. “Your coat does not look at all amiss,” his wife said to him, comforting him; “and as for a hat, why don’t you buy a new one?” “I sha’n’t breakfast in my hat,” said Fred; “but look here,” and Fred exhibited his shoes. “Get a new pair,” said Mary. “No,” said he; “I’ve sworn to have nothing new till I’ve earned the money. Mr. Webb won’t expect to see me very bright, I dare say. When a man writes to beg for employment, it must naturally be supposed that he will be rather seedy about his clothes.” His wife did the best she could for him, and he went out to his breakfast.

Mrs. Webb was not there. Mr. Webb explained that she had already left town. There was no third person at the table, and before his first lamb chop was eaten, Fred had told the pith of his story. He had a little money left, just enough to pay the doctor who must attend upon his wife, and carry him through the winter;—and then he would be absolutely bare. Upon this Mr. Webb asked as to his relatives. “My father has chosen to quarrel with me,” said Fred. “I did not wish to be an attorney, and therefore he has cast me out.” Mr. Webb suggested that a reconciliation might be possible; but when Fred said at once that it was impossible, he did not recur to the subject.

When the host had finished his own breakfast, he got up from his chair, and, standing on the rug, spoke such words of wisdom as were in him. It should be explained that Pickering, in his letter to Mr. Webb, had enclosed a copy of the *Braes of Birken*, another little poem in verse, and two of the

London letters which he had written for the *Salford Reformer*. "Upon my word, Mr. Pickering, I do not know how to help you. I do not indeed."

"I am sorry for that, sir."

"I have read what you sent me, and am quite ready to acknowledge that there is enough, both in the prose and verse, to justify you in supposing it to be possible that you might hereafter live by literature as a profession; but all who make literature a profession should begin with independent means."

"That seems to be hard on the profession as well as on the beginner."

"It is not the less true; and is, indeed, true of most other professions as well. If you had stuck to the law your father would have provided you with the means of living till your profession had become profitable."

"Is it not true that many hundred men in London live on literature?" said our hero.

"Many hundred do so, no doubt. They are of two sorts, and you can tell yourself whether you belong to either. There are they who have learned to work in accordance with the directions of others; the great bulk of what comes out to us almost hourly in the shape of newspapers is done by them. Some are very highly paid, many are paid liberally, and a great many are paid scantily. There is that side of the profession, and you say that you have tried it and do not like it. Then there's those who do their work independently;—who write either books or articles which find acceptance in magazines."

"It is that which I would try if the opportunity were given me."

"But you have to make your own opportunity," said Mr. Wickham Webb. "It is the necessity of the position that it should be so. What can I do for you?"

"You know the editors of magazines."

"Granted that I do, can I ask a man to buy what he does not want because he is my friend?"

"You could get your friend to read what I write."

It ended in Mr. Webb strongly advising Fred Pickering to go back to his father, and in his writing two letters of introduction for him,—one to the editor of the *International*, a weekly gazette of mixed literature, and the other to Messrs. Brook and Boothby, publishers in St. James's-street. Mr. Webb, though he gave the letters open to Fred, read them to him with the view of explaining to him how little and how much they meant. "I do not know that they can do you the slightest service," said he; "but I give them to you, because you ask me. I strong'y advise you to go back to your father; but if you are still in town next spring, come and see me again." Then the interview was over, and Fred returned to his wife, glad to have the letters; but still with a sense of bitterness against Mr. Webb. When one word of encouragement would have made him so happy, might not Mr. Webb have spoken it? Mr. Webb had thought that he had better not speak any such word. And Fred, when he read the letters of introduction over to his wife, found them to be very cold. "I don't think I'll take them," he said.

But he did take them,—of course, on the very next day, and saw Mr. Boothby, the publisher, after waiting for half-an-hour in the shop. He swore to himself that the time was an hour and a half, and became sternly

angry at being so treated. It did not occur to him that Mr. Boothby was obliged to attend to his own business, and that he could not put his other visitors under the counter, or into the cupboards, in order to make way for Mr. Pickering. The consequence was that poor Fred was seen at his worst, and that the Boothbyan heart was not much softened towards him. "There are so many men of this kind who want work," said Mr. Boothby, "and so very little work to give them!"

"It seems to me," said Pickering, "that the demand for the work is almost unlimited." As he spoke, he looked at a hole in his boot, and tried to speak in a tone that should show that he was above his boots.

"It may be so," said Boothby; "but if so, the demands do not run in my way. I will, however, keep Mr. Webb's note by me, and if I find I can do anything for you, I will. Good-morning." Then Mr. Boothby got up from his chair, and Fred Pickering understood that he was told to go away. He was furious in his abuse of Boothby as he described the interview to his wife that evening.

The editor of the *International* he could not get to see; but he got a note from him. The editor sent his compliments and would be glad to read the article to which Mr. W. W. had alluded. As Mr. W. W. had alluded to no article, Fred saw that the editor was not inclined to take much trouble on his behalf. Nevertheless, an article should be sent. An article was written to which Fred gave six weeks of hard work, and which contained an elaborate criticism on the *Samson Agonistes*. Fred's object was to prove that Milton had felt himself to be a superior Samson,—blind, indeed, in the flesh, as Samson was blind, but not blind in the spirit as was Samson when he crushed the Philistines. The poet had crushed his Philistines with all his intellectual eyes about him. Then there was a good deal said about the Philistines of those days as compared with the other Philistines, in all of which Fred thought that he took much higher ground than certain other writers in magazines on the same subject. The editor sent back his compliments, and said that the *International* never admitted reviews of old books. "Insensate idiot!" said Fred, tearing the note asunder, and then tearing his own hair, on both sides of his head. "And these are the men who make the world of letters! Idiot! thick-headed idiot!"

"I suppose he has not read it," said Mary.

"Then why hasn't he read it? Why doesn't he do the work for which he is paid? If he has not read it, he is a thief as well as an idiot." Poor Fred had not thought much of his chance from the *International* when he first got the editor's note; but as he had worked at his Samson he had become very fond of it, and golden dreams had fallen on him, and he had dared to whisper to himself words of wondrous praise which might be forthcoming, and to tell himself of inquiries after the unknown author of the great article about the Philistines. As he had thought of this, and as the dreams and the whispers had come to him, he had rewritten his essay from the beginning, making it grander, bigger, more eloquent than before. He became very eloquent about the Philistines, and mixed with his eloquence some sarcasm which could not, he thought, be without effect even in dull-brained heavy-livered

London. Yes; he had dared to hope. And then his essay,—such an essay as this,—was sent back to him with a notice that the *International* did not insert reviews of old books! Hideous, brainless, meaningless idiot! Fred in his fury tore his article into a hundred fragments; and poor Mary was employed, during the whole of the next week, in making another copy of it from the original blotted sheets, which had luckily been preserved. “Pearls before swine!” Fred said to himself, as he slowly made his way up to the library of the Museum on the last day of that week.

That was in the end of October. He had not then earned a single shilling for many months, and the nearer prospect of that starvation of which he had once spoken so cheerily was becoming awfully frightful to him. He had said that there were worse fates than to starve. Now, as he looked at his wife, and thought of the baby that was to be added to them, and counted the waning heap of sovereigns, he began to doubt whether there was in truth anything worse than to starve. And now, too, idleness made his life more wretched to him than it had ever been. He could not bring himself to work when it seemed to him that his work was to have no result; literally none.

“Had you not better write to your father?” said Mary. He made no reply, but went out and walked up and down Museum-street.

He had been much disgusted by the treatment he had received from Mr. Boothby the publisher; but in November he brought himself to write to Mr. Boothby, and ask him whether some employment could not be found. “You will perhaps remember Mr. Wickham Webb’s letter,” wrote Fred, “and the interview which I had with you last July.” His wife had wished him to speak more civilly, and to refer to the pleasure of the interview. But Fred had declined to condescend so far. There were still left to them some thirty pounds.

A fortnight afterwards, when December had come, he got a reply from Mr. Boothby, in which he was asked to call at a certain hour at the shop in St. James’s-street. This he did, and saw the great man again. The great man asked him whether he could make an index to an historical work. Fred of course replied that he could do that,—that or anything else. He could make the index; or, if need was, write the historical work itself. That, no doubt, was his feeling. Ten pounds would be paid for the index, if it was approved. Fred was made to understand that payment was to depend altogether on approval of the work. Fred took away the sheets confided to him without any doubt as to the ultimate approval. It would be odd indeed if he could not make an index. “That young man will never do any good,” said Mr. Boothby to his foreman, as Fred took his departure. “He thinks he can do everything, and I doubt very much whether he can do anything as it should be done.”

Fred worked very hard at the index, and the baby was born to him as he was doing it. A fortnight, however, finished the index, and if he could earn money at the rate of ten pounds a fortnight he might still live. So he took his index to St. James’s-street, and left it for approval. He was told by the foreman that if he would call again in a week’s time he should hear the result. Of course he called on that day week. The work had not yet been examined,

and he must call again after three days. He did call again; and Mr. Boothby told him that his index was utterly useless,—that, in fact, it was not an index at all. “You couldn’t have looked at any other index, I think,” said Mr. Boothby.

“Of course you need not take it,” said Fred; “but I believe it to be as good an index as was ever made.” Mr. Boothby, getting up from his chair, declared that there was nothing more to be said. The gentleman for whom the work had been done begged that Mr. Pickering should receive five pounds for his labour,—which unfortunately had been thus thrown away. And in saying this Mr. Boothby tendered a five pound note to Fred. Fred pushed the note away from him, and left the room with a tear in his eye. Mr. Boothby saw the tear, and ten pounds was sent to Fred on the next day, with the gentleman’s compliments. Fred sent the ten pounds back. There was still a shot in the locker, and he could not as yet take money for work that he had not done.

By the end of January Fred had retreated with his wife and child to the shelter of a single small bedroom. Hitherto there had been a sitting-room and a bedroom; but now there was but five pounds between him and that starvation which he had once almost coveted, and every shilling must be strained to the utmost. His wife’s confinement had cost him much of his money, and she was still ill. Things were going very badly with him, and among all the things that were bad with him, his own idleness was probably the worst. When starvation was so near to him, he could not seat himself in the Museum library and read to any good purpose. And, indeed, he had no purpose. Milton was nothing to him now, as his lingering shillings became few, and still fewer. He could only sit brooding over his misfortunes, and cursing his fate. And every day, as he sat eating his scraps of food over the morsel of fire in his wife’s bedroom, she would implore him to pocket his pride and write to his father. “He would do something for us, so that baby should not die,” Mary said to him. Then he went into Museum-street, and bethought himself whether it would not be a manly thing for him to cut his throat. At any rate there would be much relief in such a proceeding.

One day as he was sitting over the fire while his wife still lay in bed, the servant of the house brought up word that a gentleman wanted to see him. “A gentleman! what gentleman?” The girl could not say who was the gentleman, so Fred went down to receive his visitor at the door of the house. He met an old man of perhaps seventy years of age, dressed in black, who with much politeness asked him whether he was Mr. Frederic Pickering. Fred declared himself to be that unfortunate man, and explained that he had no apartment in which to be seen. “My wife is in bed upstairs, ill; and there is not a room in the house to which I can ask you.” So the old gentleman and Fred walked up Museum-street and had their conversation on the pavement. “I am Mr. Burnaby, for whose book you made an index,” said the old man. Mr. Burnaby was an author well known in those days, and Fred, in the midst of his misfortunes, felt that he was honoured by the visit.

“I was sorry that my index did not suit you,” said Fred.

"It did not suit at all," said Mr. Burnaby. "Indeed it was no index. An index should comprise no more than words and figures. Your index conveyed opinions, and almost criticism."

"If you suffered inconvenience, I regret it much," said Fred. "I was punished at any rate by my lost labour."

"I do not wish you to be punished at all," said Mr. Burnaby, "and therefore I have come to you with the price in my hand. I am quite sure that you worked hard to do your best." Then Mr. Burnaby's fingers went into his waistcoat pocket, and returned with a crumpled note.

"Certainly not, Mr. Burnaby," said Fred. "I can take nothing that I have not earned."

"Now, my dear young friend, listen to me. I know that you are poor."

"I am very poor."

"And I am rich."

"That has nothing to do with it. Can you put me in the way of earning anything by literature? I will accept any such kindness as that at your hand; but nothing else."

"I cannot. I have no means of doing so."

"You know so many authors;—and so many publishers."

"Though I knew all the authors and all the publishers, what can I do? Excuse me if I say that you have not served the apprenticeship that is necessary."

"And do all authors serve apprenticeships?"

"Certainly not. And it may be that you will rise to wealth and fame without apprenticeship;—but if so, you must do it without help."

After that they walked silently together half the length of the street before Fred spoke again. "You mean," said he, "that a man must be either a genius or a journeyman."

"Yes, Mr. Pickering; that, or something like it, is what I mean."

Fred told Mr. Burnaby his whole story, walking up and down Museum-street,—even to that early assurance given to his young bride that there were worse things in the world than starvation. And then Mr. Burnaby asked him what were his present intentions. "I suppose we shall try it," said Pickering, with a forced laugh.

"Try what?" said Mr. Burnaby.

"Starvation," said Fred.

"What; with your baby,—with your wife and baby? Come; you must take my ten pound note at any rate. And while you are spending it, write home to your father. Heaven and earth! is a man to be ashamed to tell his father that he has been wrong?" When Fred said that his father was a stern man, and one whose heart would not be melted into softness at the tale of a baby's sufferings, Mr. Burnaby went on to say that the attempt should at any rate be made. "There can be no doubt what duty requires of you, Mr. Pickering. And, upon my word, I do not see what other step you can take. You are not, I suppose, prepared to send your wife and child to the poor-house." Then Fred Pickering burst into tears, and Mr. Burnaby left him at the corner of Great Russell-street, after cramming the ten-pound note into his hand.

To send his wife and child to the poor-house! In all his misery that idea had never before presented itself to Fred Pickering. He had thought of starvation, or rather of some high-toned extremity of destitution, which might be borne with an admirable and perhaps sublime magnanimity. But how was a man to bear with magnanimity a poor-house jacket, and the union mode of hair-cutting? It is not easy for a man with a wife and baby to starve in this country, unless he be one to whom starvation has come very gradually. Fred saw it all now. The police would come to him, and take his wife and baby away into the workhouse, and he would follow them. It might be that this was worse than starvation, but it lacked all that melodramatic grandeur to which he had looked forward almost with satisfaction.

"Well," said Mary to him, when he returned to her bedside, "who was it? Has he told you of anything? Has he brought you anything to do?"

"He has given me that," said Fred, throwing the bank note on to the bed, "—out of charity. I may as well go out into the streets and beg now. All the pride has gone out of me." Then he sat over the fire crying, and there he sat for hours.

"Fred," said his wife to him, "if you do not write to your father to-morrow I will write."

He went again to every person connected in the slightest degree with literature of whom he had the smallest knowledge; to Mr. Roderick Billings, to the teacher who had instructed him in shorthand writing, to all those whom he had ever seen among the newspapers, to the editor of the *International*, and to Mr. Boothby. Four different visits he made to Mr. Boothby, in spite of his previous anger, but it was all to no purpose. No one could find him employment for which he was suited. He wrote to Mr. Wickham Webb, and Mr. Wickham Webb sent him a five-pound note. His heart was, I think, more broken by his inability to refuse charity than by anything else that had occurred to him.

His wife had threatened to write to his father, but she had not carried her threat into execution. It is not by such means that a young wife overcomes her husband. He had looked sternly at her when she had so spoken, and she had known that she could not bring herself to do such a thing without his permission. But when she fell ill, wanting the means of nourishment for her child, and in her illness begged of him to implore succour from his father for her baby when she should be gone, then his pride gave way, and he sat down and wrote his letter. When he went to his ink-bottle it was dry. It was nearly two months since he had made any attempt at working in that profession to which he had intended to devote himself.

He wrote to his father, drinking to the dregs the bitter cup of broken pride. It always seems to me that the prodigal son who returned to his father after feeding with the swine suffered but little mortification in his repentant submission. He does, indeed, own his unworthiness, but the calf is killed so speedily that the pathos of the young man's position is lost in the hilarity of the festival. Had he been compelled to announce his coming by post; had he been driven to beg permission to return, and been forced to wait for a reply, his punishment, I think, would have been more severe. To Fred

Pickering the punishment was very severe, and indeed for him no fatted calf was killed at last. He received without delay a very cold letter from his father, in which he was told that his father would consider the matter. In the meanwhile thirty shillings a week should be allowed him. At the end of a fortnight he received a further letter, in which he was informed that if he would return to Manchester he would be taken in at the attorney's office which he had left. He must not, however, hope to become himself an attorney; he must look forward to be a paid attorney's clerk, and in the meantime his father would continue to allow him thirty shillings a week. "In the present position of affairs," said his father, "I do not feel that anything would be gained by our seeing each other." The calf which was thus killed for poor Fred Pickering was certainly by no means a fatted calf.

Of course he had to do as he was directed. He took his wife and baby back to Manchester, and returned with sad eyes and weary feet to the old office which he had in former days not only hated but despised. Then he had been gallant and gay among the other young men, thinking himself to be too good for the society of those around him; now he was the lowest of the low, if not the humblest of the humble.

He told his whole story by letters to Mr. Burnaby, and received some comfort from the kindness of that gentleman's replies. "I still mean," he said, in one of those letters, "to return some day to my old aspirations; but I will endeavour first to learn my trade as a journeyman of literature."

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.



A WEDDING AT KOÄTSPLOU.

THE Tailor of Koätsploou is one of the merriest little fellows in the world; wit scintillates in his little blue eyes, fun lingers in the dimples at the edges of his mouth, and there is humour in the very antics of his little legs. How he manages to get through the ordinary work of his profession is to me a mystery; for on all occasions on which we have encountered, he has never kept still for a moment. He jumps, he skips, he snaps his fingers, he gesticulates. He is as restless as the Ignis-Fatuus in *Faust*, and might truly cry with the same—

Nur zickzack geht gewöhnlich unser Lauf.

Yet he is a great man for all that. In Brittany every tailor, if he possess the slightest mother-wit, can be a great man. In the first place, he is a poet, and as such, occupies a privileged place at all feasts and merry-makings, where he shines and chants in a halo of popular tradition. Secondly, he is a musician, —can set his own words to rude music, and accompany himself on the fiddle. Thirdly and lastly, he is the recognized go-between in all love affairs, the arranger of all trothplights, the presiding genius of all weddings. Should an ardent lover languish in bashful fear of avowing his passion, he applies to the tailor, who straightway undertakes his suit, and woos by proxy in such

honied rhyme as would melt a heart of stone. Should a maiden desire to encourage some youth who is in danger of losing a golden opportunity, she quietly hints to the tailor that her heart is not unfavourable to the silent one—and the silent one must be very dull indeed if, after that, he lacks animation and relinquishes the rosy prize to another. There is no love-mission, however delicate, that the tailor may not undertake; and he is well known to be as secret as the grave. To the other pursuits and functions incident to the tailor's position, my friend of Koätsplou adds that of village barber. He not only shaves the men, but clips the bright and dark tresses of the maidens: nay, I have heard it mentioned that he has actually a connection with a great house in Paris, which empowers him to offer handsome sums to such maidens as will part with their hair for money. Not a few Breton shepherdesses add to their savings the result of dealings in their own lovely locks, and thereby add something to their marriage dower; nor do they sacrifice much in personal appearance, since the snow-white cap common to Brittany covers alike the head adorned by nature and the head whose fair crops are being used for the adornment of some Parisian beauty. Now that the odious *cbignon* is becoming so popular a portion of feminine attire, the maidens of Brittany are doing a fine trade; and the professional traders in hair, who have long haunted these districts, have multiplied themselves in every direction. The plump little beauties, I am sorry to say, are very fond of money. They would sell their sweet pink skins, if such a sale were possible.

I admire Johan, as my friend here is called, and he likes me. I am the occupant of a chamber, looking and smelling like a hayloft, in a little cottage, and am waited upon by a ghastly old woman, nearly six feet high, who calls me "her son," and has almost gone the length of kissing me. Her daughter, a fat little beauty of sixteen, cooks me omelettes pretty decently, and roasts me apples, and serves me with coffee and cognac;—and on these, with the occasional assistance of a little broth, I manage to subsist. Hither, then, comes Johan, my sworn friend, though I have only been here a few days. In return for pipes of English tobacco, and other little delicacies from my travelling bag, he regales me with all the gossip, the poetry, the legendary and fairy lore, in which he is so rich. Habitually he speaks the horrible Kernewote patois, but to me, he can express himself in decent French. Very delightful are my evenings in his company. Often, too, he accompanies me on my pilgrimages to places round about, whiling the way with many a rude snatch of ballad-song, and charming the solitude with many a strange legend. For the country round about by no means possesses the charm of prettiness—a stretch of wild moorland, dotted with rocks and boulders, only relieved occasionally by a little wood, a few acres of cultivated land, or a running brook. Yet it is by no means deficient in wild grandeur. The atmosphere is full of superstition. The solitary dolmen, or place of sacrifice, is still visible in the midst of the windy waste. The Calvary, with its wild rude figures carved in wood, stands solemnly at the skirts of the little hamlet, frightening the timid and encouraging the pious. The good people still have their fairy rings in the meadow. The Korrigaun, or water-lady, still combs her hair in the lonely stream, wooing the unwary wayfarer with her fatal

song. Yet the inhabitants of Koätsplou, like the inhabitants of most parts of the district of Cornouaille, are by no means of a gloomy disposition. In their gay recklessness and their love of practical joking, as much as in their piety and superstition, they bear a strong resemblance to the poor Irish; but they are infinitely cleaner and more polite. Though I have been only such a very short time among them, they have ceased to regard me with any suspicion, and are quite at home in my presence. The men, for the most part, are dark-haired sinewy fellows, with weather-beaten cheeks and shrewd faces. The old women are beyond conception hag-like and hideous,—as, indeed, they are all over this portion of France. The young women, on the contrary, are charming, and for the most part fair-complexioned—sly and merry to the last degree, very virtuous, and excessively fond of jokes which just pause on the borders of decency—partial, in fact, to what Béranger loved and sang so much, the *gaudriole*.

Who would not envy Johan his position among these buxom Breton maidens? He is in the prime of life, and not ugly, in spite of his red hair and grinning mouth; yet he has all the privileges of an old man; wherever he wanders, he may kiss, cuddle, and embrace at will. He does it all in so cold-blooded and business-like a way, that he arouses at once the envy and the indignation of a looker-on; for whether he smiles, or kisses, or embraces, his eye is ever bent on the sly trinket or bit of silver which he expects to be slipped into his palm. If he has love-business on hand, he is pretty certain to call at dinner-time, in the hope, almost the certainty, of being invited to take a share in the meal. To see Johan, in the centre of one or two merry maidens, would have quickened the blood of the leanest friar that ever abused King Harry on the divorce question. One he draws on his knee, another he encircles with his left arm, while his right hand pats the blushing cheek of the third. Then, his jokes, his whispered messages, his broad banter! He says things in a dreadfully open way—it is not his trade to mince matters. A girl may do anything with, and hear anything from old Johan—he is so harmless. A few of his fair confidantes, however, would blush if they knew how many of their secrets he had told to the eccentric Englishman over his pipe.

Johan does most of the wooing of the hamlet. The style is very simple. When a young fellow wishes to make a deliberate offer, he fees Johan, and acquaints him with the full particulars of his suit. Thus commissioned, and bearing a branch of broom, my friend dresses himself in holiday gear—a blue coat with glass buttons and a great hat decorated with ribbons—and sallies forth to the house of the lady's parents. Of course they know beforehand the day of his visit, and the person on whose behalf he comes. When he crosses the threshold, the matter is soon determined. If the maiden turns her back on him, or ranges the logs upright on the hearth, he may as well be gone. Such a reception is not frequent. Usually, with the cries of "Aha, Johan," "Welcome, Johan!" he is invited into the general room—the floor of which is the bare earth, the furniture a few benches and tables, and round the walls of which gleams the polished brasswork of the *lits-clos*, or closed beds. A white cloth is spread on the principal table, and the tailor is invited to partake of whatever is going. When he has satisfied both thirst and hunger, he con-

ducts the mother aside, and sets forth in the most glowing terms the advantages of an alliance with his client. A debate ensues, for it is by no means etiquette for mamma to consent at once. All the art, all the blarney, of the tailor (or *Bazvalan*, as he is called, in virtue of his office), is called into play. He parries objections, he exaggerates merits, he insinuates into the mother's heart the most delicate and honied flattery. At last the matron yields. Flushed with triumph, the *Bazvalan*, in the most poetic accents, announces the result to the maiden, who is flushed with joy. The day is named—the preliminaries are arranged—and Johan struts off to announce the glorious news, with any amount of flourishes, to his delighted client. The lover sees from afar off that he still bears the branch of broom, the emblem of success. If the branch of broom had been exchanged for a branch of hazel, that would be the proclamation of ignominious rejection.

I longed heartily to see a Breton wedding, and now my dear little Johan is about to gratify me. A month ago, he went through the above-described process in the house of a well-to-do farmer hard by, and the marriage is to take place this day. The sun is shining merrily, and all the hamlet is in commotion. I have arrayed myself in a suit of black to the amaze of everybody, my over-affectionate landlady included; and am about to amble over on an old horse to the spot where the pretty Tina dwells.

After a slow jog-trot over a mile of moorland I find myself among the crowd in the yard adjoining the bride's house. A merry and a motley group they are. The bridegroom leads the way, mounted on a fine strong horse, which has just been taken from the plough. He is attended by his "best man," similarly mounted; and among the others, who are seated on various kinds of sorry-looking nags, I notice one withered little old man doing his best to manage a refractory donkey. Both he and his donkey are well known to the people present, although he has come from a distant village. Indeed, I find that attendance at weddings is the old fellow's occupation, and that he generally enacts the part of the *Breutaër*, or Bard of the Bride. There is much joking at his expense, but he pays as much attention to it as does his donkey. There is likewise much joking of another kind, the humour being founded on the broad and the indelicate; but altogether I am not sure that it is any more wicked or indeed more offensive, than might and would be found among the same class in England, where it is considered clever on such occasions to make remarks of such a nature as cause matrons to titter and maidens to blush. While the *Breutaër* passes quietly into the house and is lost to view—to reappear again, however, very soon—I look around and observe my friend Johan, who has just arrived—his obstinate little pony having been more than usually obstinate this morning. When in this state, Johan tells me, the only means by which he can induce his animal to behave like a rational pony, is to wring and twist his tail vigorously three or four times, and call him an ass. And now commences the business for which we are all of us assembled. Johan alights from his pony, and ascending the steps of the bride's house, throws himself into the attitude of an inspired improvisatore, and emits some doggerel verses. He begins by invoking a blessing on all within the house in the name of the Trinity, and then, his

voice becoming very melancholy in tone, hopes that more joy may be theirs than has fallen to his lot. "Why are you so sad, my friend?" inquires the Breutaër, gruffly, from within. Whereunto Johan replies, "I had a little white-fleeced lamb in my fold with my golden-horned little ram, but the great wolf came and has frightened my white-fleeced little pet away, and I know not what has become of her." The Breutaër now opens the door, and looking very intently at Johan's fine crop of red hair, says, "For a man to whom such a great misfortune has happened, you are in very fine condition. Are you going to a dance, that you have combed your beautiful hair with such care?" The bridegroom's bard winces at this home-thrust; "but don't insult me in my distress," he loftily exclaims. "Have you not seen my white-fleeced little lamb? I am in search of her, and happiness will be mine no more till she is found." The Breutaër avows that he has seen neither the white-fleeced little lamb, nor the golden-horned ram; and this so enrages the tailor, that he calls his brother bard all sorts of bad names. "The people," he continues, "have told me that they saw my little pet fly to your farmyard for refuge from the great wolf." But the bride's bard persists in asserting that he has seen neither the little lamb nor the little ram. Whereupon the bridegroom's bard, growing desperate, says, "My golden-horned ram will die if his white-fleeced mate be found not! My poor ram will die! I will go and look in your farmyard." "Stay, my friend," interposes the other; "I will see whether I can find your white-fleeced pet for you." Then he goes away, and presently returns with a wonderfully pretty child. "Behold!" he cries, "I have not found your white-fleeced pet, but I have found a charming little chicken, which I present to you, old boy, that your soul may be gladdened." "A delicious chicken, truly, Friend Thin-jaws," replies Johan, "and were my golden-horned ram a *chef* among the cannibals, he would make of her a ravishing stew. But I must seek for my white-fleeced pet." "Rest a moment, you donkey," says the Breutaër, "I will search yet again:" and going into the house he returns this time with its mistress, a buxom dame of forty, who evidently enters into the ceremony with infinite zest, doubtless recalling the time when she played a leading, instead of a subordinate part, as now. "I have searched," says the Breutaër, "but could only find this plump hen. Take her to your heart, old boy, and console yourself in your distress, for she will lay you plenty of eggs." "What would my golden-horned ram do with so fine a hen? Besides, he is too young to feed on omelettes, and pines for his white-fleeced pet." Thus speaking, the bridegroom's bard pretends to make another rush after the missing lamb, but is again stopped by the bride's bard, who insists on once more searching in person. This time he returns with the old grandmother, a dreadful-looking lady. "Everywhere have I searched," he shrieks, "but only this old cow could I find. Take her, my friend, and perhaps even yet she may yield some milk for your white-fleeced pet, when you find her." "Thank you," replies the little tailor. "The cow, though old, deserves our respect, and I render to her my homage. But I do not want your chicken, nor your hen, nor your cow, and this time I must go to seek for my white-fleeced lamb myself." "Ah! since you will take no denial," exclaims the bride's bard, "let us go together to your white-

fleeced lamb. She is *not* lost, for I have carefully guarded her from harm in a little fold made of all that is precious, and whereof the door can only be opened by the key of true love. He, he! There is your white-fleeced lamb all-beautiful, all-blushing. Her outward loveliness, I assure you, is surpassed only by the beauty of her mind, and the music of her pure heart is as the tinkling of sheep-bells on a sunny day."

Hereupon, headed by Johan, who has already drawn his fiddle from a dirty bag, we all rush into the great room, where massive tables and benches, covered with plenty of nice things, are all ready for our reception; and there, in a truth, sits the bride, blushing in her gay gear—as sweet a little bit of pink loveliness as ever counted beads. A duck of a bride—or rather "a dainty little partridge of partridges," as Johan gallantly terms her. In silk mantua, and embroidered cap, and stockings with delicious "clocks" upon her plump, shapely limbs, she flutteringly receives the bridegroom's kiss, and the congratulations of all her friends. Mark those silver braids placed on her arm. According to the number of those is the number of thousands of francs she brings as a dowry. Four! That is four thousand francs, or about one hundred and sixty pounds sterling. So that little Tina is quite a bride of fortune. But an important part of the ceremony is about to be gone through. Tina's papa, a jolly old farmer, who smells strongly of cognac, presents the bridegroom with a horse-girth. "Girdle her, my son!" he says, with a slight hiccup, and "girdle her! girdle her!" resounds on all sides. Thus urged, the bridegroom passes the horse-girth round little Tina's waist, and the bride's poet croaks the following doggrel song, while Johan faintly plays the air on his fiddle, and the wedding guests join in the chorus:—

Down in the field by the side of the farm,
What should I see but a fine young filly!
She frisk'd and she sported, and thought of no harm,
(He! he! thought of no harm!)

Her lips were like roses, her cheeks like a lily.

Ali! Ké! the filly!

Her coyness is turning me silly!

CHORUS—*Ali! Ké! the filly, &c.*

A coat with gold buttons I wore, full of joy,
And seam'd with the silver were waistcoat and breeches—
Why, then, was the little one timid and coy?
(He! he! timid and coy!)

Why, then, did she tremble to hark to my speeches?

Ali! Ké! the filly!

She took my first wooings but illy!

CHORUS—*Ali! Ké! the filly, &c.*

But nearer and nearer she drew as she played,
And bent her white neck, and was kindly and gay with me;
I bridled her, sirs, and she wasn't afraid,
(He! he! wasn't afraid!)

I girdled her, sirs, and I led her away with me!

Ali! Ké! the filly!

She kisses with cheeks like a lily!

CHORUS—*Ali! Ké! the filly, &c.*

* *Ali! Ké!—Ho! Come!*

When the chant is over, Johan, who has hearkened with a savage sneer to the croaking of his rival, invokes all sorts of blessings on the bride, and (as far as I can make out) upon everybody. Little Tina cries, and throws herself into her mother's arms. She rescues herself, however, to pledge troth with the bridegroom and exchange her ring for his, while the tailor rapidly repeats the "Ave Mary" in the local dialect. Then Johan claps hands, and the "best man" escorts Tina over the threshold, closely followed by the bridegroom, arm-in-arm with the principal bridesmaid. The bridegroom mounts his horse, and the bride is lifted up behind him. Then the others, men, women, and boys, are mounted on horses, mules, and even asses; the tailor cries, "Off!" and away they dash at a break-neck pace to the church, each man with a female clinging behind him. How the men shout! how the women scream!—till, in a panting crowd, they halt at the church gates.

The ceremony is soon over, and back they trot more soberly—little Tina quite fresh and confident, now that so much of the business is over. A ragged bagpiper has joined the troop, and fills the air with his wild music as they halt at the farm door. Great have been the preparations in their absence. Both indoors, and on the green in front of the house, are stretched tables loaded with eatables and drinkables, and the great room within is carpeted with white cloth and strewn with flowers. At the end of the board within, little Tina takes her seat, and garlands of leaves and flowers are hung over her. Then, after a prayer, all fall to, without and within. What a grinding of teeth! what a draining of flagons!

It would take me many a page to describe the rest of the festivities of the evening—the drinking! the dancing! the kissing! the song-singing! the wicked joke-making!

As the night advances most of the men are tipsy, and my friend Johan after a savage quarrel with his rival, has doubled his legs under him and sunk into a senseless heap. What more is there to do, and why do the guests linger? It is past eleven, and little Tina has yawned thrice. At last the bride rises, and her maids proceed—to undress her! That is a simple task, as she is well prepared, and the throwing away of outer apparel shows her clad in an embroidered night-gown of snowy white. How she cries and blushes as the bridesmaids pop her into the closed bed yonder. The bridegroom, looking very sheepish, joins her. Seated side by side in bed, they partake of soup, cake, and walnuts, while fiddle and bagpipes play, and all the guests join in a song. . . . But see! yonder is the chaste moon peeping in through the window. Shoulder the insensible Johan, cry "Benedicite," and come away!

OUR IDLE VOYAGER.



SYDNEY DOBELL.

TEN years ago the readers of the magazines and critical reviews could hardly fail to encounter unfavourable strictures on what was called the "Spasmodic School of Poetry." The three or four writers supposed to constitute that "school" were, at the period referred to, passing through the fires of exhortation, reproof, and parody. The nickname was the invention of a brilliant poet and wit—recently gone to his rest; and it had a nickname's best prosperity—it stuck. That this said nickname had, in some rough obvious manner, hit off the salient characteristics and defects of the "school," was evident from the favour with which it was received. The quaint brain of Professor Aytoun shaped the happy phrase; and immediately thereafter the three or four writers were everywhere recognised as "spasmodists," just as, since Mr. Bright, in his speech a short while ago, alluded to the cave of Adullam and its inhabitants, Lords Grosvenor and Elcho, Messrs. Horsman and Lowe have been "Adullamites," or "Dwellers in the Cave," to all the world. Nothing tells like a nickname which catches the popular ear, and which is called out at every street corner. The nickname "Spasmodic School" grew popular, and in a short time it became the critical stock-in-trade of provincial newspapers, just as if they had been its sole inventors and had taken out a patent for its exclusive use. For a while no one of the writers could air himself in public in a volume of verse, however staid and hum-drum, without the cry of "spasmodist" being raised, here, there, and everywhere, so loudly that he was glad to retreat again into his shell. All this is a matter of ten years ago. For seven years past the magazine reader has heard nothing of the "Spasmodic school,"—it is the lost pleiad of the critical firmament. Oblivion distributeth her poppies with an equal hand. *Firmilian*, too, has been forgotten in these years. The nicknamed and the nicknamer sleep in the same forgetfulness of reviews—like foemen in one grave.

The reviews are powerful, but they are not omnipotent; and a man's work exists, after the reviewers have said their best and their worst about it, precisely as it is. On the whole there is nothing more curious than the fluctuations of literary reputations. A poet comes into fashion very much as crinoline came into fashion, is universally quoted as crinoline was universally worn, and in due time makes way for a new favourite. Wordsworth's fame was of slow and cedar-like growth; but it attracted a larger number of pilgrims fifteen years ago than it does now. Byron sank after his death, and is slowly rising to be permanently recognised, not as the greatest poet, but as the greatest intellectual force and portent of his time. His poetry was but the brilliant hectic-coloured blossom; the wholesome fruit we were destined never to see. Had he lived, it is plainly visible in the closing cantos of *Don Juan*, he would have deserted poetry for prose fiction, and been our second Fielding, and our greater. Keats culminated ten years ago on the publication of his *Life* by Lord Houghton, and leads at present a sort of pale lunar rainbow existence in the pages of his imitators. Several years since the *Quarterly Review* spoke of Robert Browning as a man possessed of some slight tincture of poetic

individuality, and was good enough to quote with approval passages from *Paracelsus* and *Bells and Pomegranates*; to day he is regarded by many as the most original of living poets, original in merit and defect, in music, thought, and dramatic instinct. The Laureate has long been popular, but he is popular not so much from the essential merits of his verse as from his exquisite form, exquisite finish, and the wonderful way in which he reflects the culture, the sentiment, the refined lazy scepticism made amiable only by its sadness, the vague aspirations of English society. He holds the mirror up to the time, but it is an enchanted one and reflects but noble faces. People will weary of his finish as they weary of pictures executed on ivory; and he will be succeeded by some far stormier and less perfectly balanced spirit. While noticing this ebb and flow of poetical reputations it may not be too much to infer that the oblivion to which the "Spasmodic School" has been consigned for the last few years has been to a considerable extent undeserved. At all events, leaving the other writers whom this matter may concern to shift for themselves, I am anxious to speak for a few pages concerning Sydney Dobell, by far the most important member of the "school," and whom not a few fairly intelligent persons in England and America consider to have written some of the noblest poetry of our day. In the courts of law, when a man conceives that justice has not been done, it is competent for him to call for a new trial. In the interest of Sydney Dobell I move for a new trial in the courts of criticism.

Originality, as it is called, is, in popular estimation, a first merit in a writer; but then this originality may either attract or repel. In itself originality is not necessarily a merit. The colour-blind man is original in a world of men gifted with normal powers of vision. To a sane individual there is nothing more frightfully original than the seething brain of a madman. Our dreams are more original than our waking moments, but they are, on the whole, less wise. The feeling of strangeness with which one occasionally, for the first time, peruses a book does not usually go for much. It is frequently the mere foreign-looking husks and wrappings of the matter—the wampum-belt and scalp-tuft of the Pawnee Indian, the bear-skin and snow-shoes of the Esquimaux—rather than the matter itself. The highest beauty does not dazzle at first, it more frequently seems a simple plainness. The writers who strike you as original are never original enough, just as the man who strikes you as cunning has not been cunning enough to hide his cunning. All the colours sleep in a beam of pure white light. The generations of books are like the generations of men, the one begets the other, and not unfrequently the features of an ancestor recur in a descendant of to-day. Absolute originality, even were it possible, would be of no effect. An absolutely original book would resemble the scenery of the moon. It would be a world without an atmosphere. In reading such a book one would be reft away from the mighty aids of association and use and wont. In the sense of newness and strangeness Australia is the most original country on the planet, and it is the least interesting. In the same sense Asia and Europe are the least original and the most interesting. The strange kangaroo of the one continent is nothing to the homely sparrow of the other, which has been man's companion and chirped on his thatch during six millenniums. In poetry the gaudy parrot is as

nothing compared with the brown lark. It is astonishing, when one reflects on it, to what few and simple root-ideas the entire poetry of the world may be traced. I am, I was, I love, I hate, I suffer, I am glad, I must die—these lie at the bottom of all song. After the death of Abel the first family had pretty nearly gone the round of all possible experiences. In the primordial elements of human experience there is nothing trite—except to the trite; and the only faithful originality comes out of an entire and noble apprehension of those primordial elements, and the man who can to that noble apprehension give musical utterance is a poet, and a sufficiently original one, too, for all purposes. The generations of singing birds pass, but the music of the spring mornings goes on, although it has hardly changed a note since Adam. Originality is not a thing which a man can put on like a cloak to masquerade in. It is, if he have it at all, the pure outcome of his personality—the clear, unobscured, unobstructed, utterance of his nature—that which is to himself special and peculiar like the tone of his voice and the play of his features—an undefinable something of which he is in the profoundest unconsciousness, but by which he is made recognisable and is set apart from other men. Thus it comes about that the original man is the least conscious of being original. It is easy for a beauty to be beautiful, it is easy for an original man to be original. And the undefinable something which sets a man apart from his fellows is the most valuable thing in the world; it is absolutely priceless. You cannot forecast its next manifestation any more than you can conceive of a new colour. It cannot be imitated, it can never be forged; no counterfeit by any possibility can ever pass current—and yet every man and woman is born into the world with some proportion of it, more or less. To this pure, clear, natural note of the soul all the world listens—for a whole grove of clever mocking-birds, no one cares. Nature makes the Koh-i-Noor, and Birmingham will turn you out a bushel of imitations. And it is this special and individual something in great writers which, above all things, subserves a noble culture. These men bring a new thing into the world with them, and when they die they leave it as an inheritance. Scott writes, and the historic past is no longer pale and cold, but warm and many-coloured. Wordsworth writes, and ever after the solitariest place breathes an austere contentment, and to the thoughtful man there is no such thing as utter loneliness in the world. Keats writes, and the coldness of Greek marble is faintly tinged with passion. In modern culture all the poets are represented by their best.

And in the sense of having something personal and peculiar, some new thing to supplement and enrich modern culture, Sydney Dobell is fairly entitled to be considered an original poet. I have remarked elsewhere that Chaucer and Spenser are the fountain-heads of all succeeding English poetry. Chaucer is the father of the humorous, kindly, dramatic, genially-lyrical men; Spenser of the intense, allegorical, didactic, remote, and, by comparison, unsocial men. Shakspeare, Dryden, Burns, Byron, Browning, draw descent from Chaucer. Milton, Young, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson from Spenser. Sydney Dobell too is of the line and stock of Spenser. His mental constitution is high, solitary, disdainful. His genius is of an ascetic and fakir kind. He stands apart from his fellows, and wraps himself up in

the mantle of his own thoughts. He is terribly self-conscious; he is the slave of ideas; he writes for a purpose, and as if under a certain compulsion. There is nothing he hates so intensely as commonplace; nothing he loves so intensely as beauty—the more ideal the better; and in his fine music a quick ear will not unfrequently detect a stridulous tone, as if the string from which it is drawn were a trifle too tightly strung. In whatever he writes, whether he is purely and simply beautiful, or haughty as Apollo conscious of glowing limbs, or grotesque or extravagant, you will find nothing done at haphazard; he knows precisely the why and the wherefore, and will be able to render you a sufficient reason for everything. If it be at all admissible, now that the word has been so foully fingered and misused, to call a man *earnest*, that man is Sydney Dobell. He is essentially a missionary. He has neither written for the mere enjoyment of writing, nor for money, nor for fame, but mainly because he has a doctrine to preach, a cause to plead; and his doctrine he has preached in ears too long accustomed to sounding brasses and tinkling cymbals to give heed to high discourse. Mr. Carlyle preaches hero-worship, Mr. Dobell preaches genius-worship. At bottom the two doctrines are essentially the same, only the one man abides in the practical, the other in the ideal. In Mr. Dobell's conception genius, poetic genius more especially, is ever a new revelation to man. To him the poet is the Teacher, bringing to his fellows new ideas of truth, beauty, and morality. In his mind the great poet is the most perfect human being, and as the greater includes the less, he is at the same time the true legislator and ruler. That as such he is not recognised by men,—why then the worse for men. Mr. Dobell would have the world sit at the feet of the poets, and shape everything, not only private conduct, but parliaments, statute-books, home and foreign policies, according to their behests. In his idea a poem should go forth like the proclamation of a king; adverse critics he regards as rebels against lawful authority, and would probably have them executed forthwith. To such a writer it will be at once evident that poetry is no holiday pastime, but a most solemn and responsible duty, to the proper discharge of which everything must be brought of best, noblest, and bravest. To such a man no labour can be too severe, no study too intense, no experience too bitter: poverty, pain, death itself would be even welcome, if so be he could perfect his art, and thereby save, or help to save, a world grievously out of joint. And the poet must not only be true to other men, he must be true to himself. Never arrogant, he should be always dignified; he must remember that there is no greatness beyond his own; that this complex visible world, with its capitals and standing armies, is based upon ideas, and that in the ideal department of things he is a king, enforcing and abrogating at his pleasure. Above all, he must remember that as an apostle of the highest, it behoves him to take heed to his walk and conversation. He has not only to write poems, he must also live poems. The song should be pure and noble, and so should also the life of the singer be. As poetry is above ordinary prose, so should his morality be above ordinary morality.

This idea of the poet and the poetic life cannot be regarded otherwise than as a high one. Without some such basement of belief one cannot see how,

more especially in these times, the poetic life can be conducted at all; but as, in order that the tree shall leaf, and blossom, and bear fruit, it is necessary that the root should be hidden away underground, deep-sunken in life-giving soil; so, in like manner, if the poet would go on prosperously with his work, it is essential that his belief and theories concerning himself and his art should be buried in the silent depths of his nature; that he should quietly draw spiritual sustenance from these, and in no wise obtrude them on the world. We have nothing to do with the food which the athlete devours, we have only to do with the results,—the mighty limbs, the iron sinews. There is nothing with which a poet has less need to concern himself than with poets and poetry, and here it is where Mr. Dobell has to some extent gone astray. Poetry is not, or at all events should not be, a Narcissus in love with his own shadow, and eternally gazing upon it. It has to do with everything except itself; it is the divine light in which we see heroism, duty, love, beauty, death. It is not the hero, it is only the song which celebrates the exploits of the hero. Women are not specially interesting to women, poets are not specially interesting to poets; Mr. Dobell seems to have forgotten this, and in *Balder*, his longest book, and with all defects, this primal one included, his greatest, he concerns himself with a poet from first to last, gives his soliloquies, his notions concerning his art, quotes the songs he sung at intervals, the scraps of verse with which he hung the walls of his chamber, tells us what books he purposed to write, and through which he meant to regenerate the world. *Balder* is the longest poem of our time, with the exception perhaps of *Festus*; and apart from the exquisite songs of Amy, which if extracted would of themselves make a mournful anthology, there are not in its entire length a dozen pages of purely human interest. It contains wonderful things, it has passages of marvellous subtlety and music, but these fail to make pleasing the stupendous egotism. Now it is evident that if you wish to cure a sick man you must give him a medicine which it is possible for him to take, and if you wish by means of a poem to make the world better, you must needs write a poem which it will be possible for the world to read. *Balder* is to the large majority of persons simply unreadable, and this not from any defect of genius, but because it is based upon an erroneous theory. In *Balder* too one is perpetually conscious of a certain compulsion, of effort; there is a lack of spontaneity, of easy, unconscious, unsolicited result, as of an Æolian harp sighing to the caprices of intermittent wind. At times the writer almost ceases to be a poet, and becomes a pamphleteer. In all Mr. Dobell's books intellectual subtlety plays him false; not unfrequently the dialectician overrides the poet. When opportunity offers he ceases singing to argue,

Like some budge doctor of the Stoic fur;

and the matters over which he subtilizes are the most filmy and intangible. He will unravel you a thread of morning gossamer, he will dissect you an ephemeron, he will lay you bare the heart of a mote of the sun-beam. When he grapples with a subject both he and it, like hawk and heron, disappear in the distance. He defines everything to the vanishing point, and beyond it. All this kind of thing seems laborious

trifling to a reader of normal instincts. You can respect a whirlwind when it sinks a ship or blows down a house; you cannot when it merely makes a spire of dust and straws at the corner of a street. Mr. Dobell's remarkable subtlety is in his art rather a hindrance than an aid, and is so for several reasons. In the first place, he has an entire and abiding horror of commonplace; and although it may be seen leading easily and definitely to results, he cannot bear to walk, for ever so short a distance, in a beaten path. Above all things he will be independent, original, and self-sustained. He will lie under poetic obligations to no one. He will not only build his house after his own plan, but he insists in providing his materials out of his own quarries and forests. Had it been possible he would have invented a language of his own. He is continually "seeking out a new path for himself," a task which Goethe was happy in *not* having forced upon him. He will always stand on virgin soil; and as the red Indian retires into his aboriginal forests when he smells the watchfire of the white settler, Mr. Dobell, on the approach of the ordinary and commonplace, retires into the unpierced depths of his nature, where no one can follow him, and where his subtlety is of non effect, for the reason that it has no spectator. Then, again, Mr. Dobell is what Dr. Johnson would have called a "metaphysical poet," and he has much in common with Cowley and Donne in past generations, and with Shelley in our own. Like these, he has a whole body of ingenious theories, whimsies, and conceits on every subject under the sun to enforce, illustrate, and uphold. In all this his amazing subtlety has ample play, but then in the work he is beyond the sympathies of his readers. There is such an entity doubtless as the pure spirit of life, but we have knowledge of it only through the form it assumes. There is such a thing as the spirit of poetry, but it is only recognisable in the concrete—in a flower, in a lark's song, in a beautiful woman, in some human experience more or less complex. Mr. Dobell's verse is often not sufficiently "clothed upon;" it does not take palpable form and substance, but abides in vague guesses and shadows of things. It is too often like the night wind, a haunter of waste and solitary places in which there is no human dwelling; a something of which we are cognizant, but of which the imagination can form no picture. And in common with earnest, eager, theoretical men, Mr. Dobell's volatile impracticability of mind is unregulated by humour. He is defective in that quick, saving sense of the ludicrous which is a man's best safeguard from absurdity both in literature and in social life. He has plenty of wit, the brilliant sparks of collision,

——— the light
Struck out from clashing swords in fight ;—

but of humour, that other kind of love, with its tenderness and sadness, without its fiery passion and pain, there is perhaps not any very definite trace discoverable in his writings. He is, in consequence, always too trenchant and grim-earnest; there is a lack of ease, of rapid lightness of touch, of graceful sportiveness. It is from this lack of humour, I take it, that Mr. Dobell is too persistently dignified. The port of a king in a grand state ceremonial is simply laughable when transferred to his private apartment, or

to a walk in his palace grounds of a morning before breakfast. Mr. Dobell has not learned how to unbend; he is always in full uniform, never in *musfi*. Like Shelley, he is a great deal too constantly poetical. Genius is the most precious of mental gifts, gold is the most precious of metals; but as you cannot work gold without an alloy, you cannot make much use of genius without an intermixture of prosaic common-sense and mother-wit.

I have spoken thus frankly of what seems to me Mr. Dobell's defects, in order that I may just as frankly speak of his merits. These are very much higher than the general public appear at all to be aware. For intellectual force, poetic instinct, and vitality, he may claim to be ranked, *pari passu*, with Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning. He is in the best sense, as has been already indicated, an original man. He is a poet; but he bears to other poets the likenesses and differences that the birch bears to the elm and the oak. He is of the same genus, but not the same species. Of all recent writers, he seems to bear the closest resemblance to Shelley. He has much of Shelley's levity, impracticability, exaggeration, and hectic over-colour; he has all Shelley's subtlety, analytic habit and power, splendour of imagery, dramatic instinct, and rich-flowing lyrical impulse. There are as noble passages in the *Roman* as you will find in *Hellas*; there is as intricate searching of dark bosoms and moods in *Balder* as in the *Cenci*; there are lyrics in *England in Time of War* which will mate with the *Sensitive Plant* and the *Skylark*. And as, when a man is under strong emotion, there gleams on his countenance an expression which is not ordinarily there, a look of *race*, in which father, grandfather, and great-grandfather are blended; so in Mr. Dobell's finer passages one discerns a something native to himself and to none other; a something which finds its analogue in sculpture rather than in painting; a purity as of the undraped limbs of the marble nymph; a shining ethereal beauty, as of the stalk of white lilies which female saints wear—clouds of cherubs fluttering around their feet—as they rise into a heaven of blue and gold, in mediæval Italian altar-pieces.

The *Roman* was published—the author yet very young—in the after-swell of the revolutionary impulse of 1848. It had a great success, was admired by quick, vivid, impulsive Charlotte Brontë; and was regarded by all capable of forming a judgment in such matters, as the work of a man certain to leave a name amongst the poetical writers of his country. The work was thrown into a loose dramatic form, and its energy, enthusiasm, and eloquence were considered little less than marvellous. On the top of the first page the author described his hero—"Vittorio Santo, a missionary of freedom. He has gone out disguised as a monk to preach the unity of Italy, the overthrow of the Austrian domination, and the restoration of a great Roman Republic;" and from its subject it naturally became a pendant to the *Deformed Transformed* of Byron and the *Hellas* of Shelley. The scenes are nine in number, and tell no very closely-knit and connected story: the monk is the main speaker throughout, and although there is a monotony of eloquence inseparable somewhat from the conception and plan, vigour and spirit never flag, and from beginning to close the reader is carried stormily along. The tone is a little too highly pitched all through; now and again there is a slight tendency to

extravagance; but apart from these defects of youth, the delight in the exercise of a newly-discovered power, the style is unexceptionable—the English is clear, vivid, nervous, and without the slightest haze of obscurity; you are constantly reminded of Byron in the swell and movements of the verse. The first scene opens at evening on an ancient Italian battlefield, on which a number of young men and maidens are dancing and singing. The monk is standing by, and at length breaks in upon the dancers. He speaks to them of Italy, his mother and theirs, and how the ground they dance on is her grave. The speech is too long to quote, but its drift and character will be gathered from the following:—

I pray you listen how I loved my mother,
And you will weep with me. She loved me, nurst me,
And fed my soul with light. Morning and even
Praying, I sent that soul into her eyes,
And knew what heaven was though I was a child.
I grew in stature, and she grew in goodness.
I was a grave child; looking on her taught me
To love the beautiful: and I had thoughts
Of Paradise, when other men have hardly
Looked out of doors on earth. (Alas! alas!
That I have also learned to look on earth
When other men see heaven.) I toiled, but even
As I became more holy, she seemed holier;
Even as when climbing mountain-tops the sky
Grows ampler, higher, purer as ye rise.
Let me believe no more. No, do not ask me
How I repaid my mother. O thou saint,
That lookest on me day and night from heaven,
And smilest, I have given thee tears for tears,
Anguish for anguish, woe for woe. Forgive me
If, in the spirit of ineffable penance
In words, I waken up the guilt that sleeps.
Let not the sound afflict thine heaven, or colour
That pale, tear-blotted record which the angels
Keep of my sins. We left her. I and all
The brothers that her milk had fed. We left her—
And strange dark robbers with unwonted names
Abused her! bound her! pillaged her! profaned her!
Bound her clasped hands, and gagged the trembling lips
That pray'd for her lost children. And we stood
And she knelt to us, and we saw her kneel,
And looked upon her coldly and denied her!
Denied her in her agony—and counted
Before her sanguine eyes the gold that bought
Her pangs. We stood——

Here the revellers, thinking that a veritable mother of the flesh is spoken of, break in on the monk and load him with reproaches and execrations. He undeceives them—

You are my brothers. And my mother was
Yours. And each man amongst you day by day
Takes, bowing, the same price that sold my mother,
And does not blush. Her name is ROME. Look round,

And see those features which the sun himself
 Can hardly leave for fondness. Look upon
 Her mountain bosom where the very sky
 Beholds with passion ; and with the last proud
 Imperial sorrow of dejected empire,
 She wraps the purple round her outraged breast,
 And even in fetters cannot be a slave.
 Look on the world's best glory and worst shame.

* * * *

They are some souls
 That once took flesh and blood in Italy,
 And thought it was a land to draw free breath in,
 And drew it long, and died here ; and since live
 Everywhere else.

* * * *

Look on that mother and behold her sons !
 Alas, she might be Rome if there were Romans !
 Look on that mother ! Wilt thou know that death
 Can have no part in Beauty ? Cast to-day
 A seed into the earth, and it shall bear thee
 The flowers that waved in the Egyptian hair
 Of Pharaoh's daughter !

In such eloquent fashion storms on the passionate monk until, recovering from his enthusiasm, he finds that with the exception of Francesca the revelers have one by one stolen away. The monk perceives her, and she, with all his words flaming in her heart, asks—

I have heard much to-night
 Of Roman deeds, of sages, and of heroes,
 Of sons who loved, and sons who have betrayed.
 Hath Rome no daughters to repeat her beauty,
 Renew the model of old time, and teach
 Her sons to love the mother in the child ?
 Was Rome, my father, built and peopled by
 One sex ? The very marble of your ruins
 Looks masculine. In heart I roam about them ;
 But wheresoe'er my female soul peers in—
 Even to the temple courts—some bearded image
 Gives privilege. Doth Salique law entail
 The heritage of glory ? Is there nothing,
 Nothing, my father, in the work of freedom
 For woman's hand to do ?

A long colloquy follows, Santo accepts her services, and we have the result of it all in Scene iv. Francesca is alone, and in her soliloquy she subtly and tenderly reveals a woman's undevotion to abstractions, and her love for Santo.

And thou ! Country !
 Thou stern and awful god, of which my reason
 Preaches infallibly, but which no sense
 Bears witness to—I would thou hadst a shape.
 It might be dwarf, deformed, maimed,—anything,
 So it was thine ; and it would stand to me

For beauty. And my soul should wait on it,
 And I would train my fancies all about it,
 Till growing to its fashion, and most nurtured
 With smiles and tears they strengthened into love.
 But, Santo, this indefinite dim presence
 I cannot worship. O thou dear Apostle,
 Oh what a patriot could Francesca be
 If thou wert Rome.

* * * * *

Heart, have all thy will !
 Santo, I love thee ! love thee ! love thee ! love thee !
 Santo, I love thee ! oh, thou wild word love !
 Thou bird broke loose ! I could say on and on,
 And feel existence but to speak and hear.
 Santo, I love thee ! Hear, Francesca loves thee !
 Santo, I love thee ! oh, my heart, my heart,
 My heart, thou Arab mad with desert thirst
 In sight of water.

Immediately on this, Ceco, a friend, approaches and informs Francesca that Santo has been taken prisoner by the Austrians, and is sentenced to be shot at dawn. What follows reads like a passage from the old masters of the English drama. Francesca shows a poniard.

Ceco,
 Tell me ; tell all, ah Ceco—nay, look here
 In the moonlight—Saints ! I can use it !
 Strange
 Wild girl, how ? Knowest thou not as well as I
 Vittorio preaching to some Milanese
 Who would be patriots if they knew but how,
 Spent precious hours in which the German foe
 Slipt from the snare ? Whereat brave Roderigo—
 A gallant sword—the greatest libertine
 In Milan—seized him. In the castle dungeon
 He lies since noon, and with the coming dawn
 Dies.

Francesca. Dies, dies—who dies ? Pray you, friend, say on ;
 I am not wont to wander.

This is well !
 That last waltz spent me. Let me see, what gallant
 Danced young Francesca down ? Nay, he'll boast rarely !
 Yet it seems long ago—long, long ago.
 Such dreamless sleep ! Thou melancholy moon,
 What ! have I caught my death damp of the dews ?
 Death,—death—ah !—
 A gallant sword—the greatest libertine
 In Milan ?—yes, yes,—Roderigo,—yes—
 He lies since noon—ay, in the castle dungeon,
 And with the dawn—no, no, thou pitiless sun !
 Thou durst not rise ! oh sea, if thou hast waves,
 Quench him !
 A gallant sword—the greatest libertine
 In Milan—ah—the greatest libertine ?
 Who says I am not fair ? Ye gods ! I curse you :
 Why do ye tempt me ?

It is over Ceco :

Ceco, I tell thee it is past, is past.

Santo is free, Look thou that horses wait

Near the east gate by sunrise.

In the next scene we are introduced to a number of students and burghers in the common room, discussing the news of the day—notably the rescue of this monk by Francesca.

Lelio.

At midnight—

(Count Grassi's child hath a fair face).

Several.

At midnight

Count Grassi's child hath a fair face ! Fie, Lelio ;

Why, what a traitor art thou !

Lelio.

Attend I say !

Count Rossi's lewdness is a proverb—

Several (pour badiner).

Hold,

Lelio, for pity—there are bachelors here—

We are not all companions in misfortune !

For pity, Lelio !

Lelio.

You that shout for pity,

If you be Pity's followers, do her now

Your best allegiance. Good friends, I, her quæstor,

Claim tribute for her. A few tears will pay it.

Listen. The young Francesca, at the price

Of her fair body, bought the captive's life ;

The priest is free. Do not cry out. Young Rossi

Craved instant payment. She in her superb

High loveliness, whose every look enhanced

The ransom, sent him from her, glad to grant

Another maiden hour for prayer and tears.

Francesca wore a poniard. She is now

A maid for ever.

Hostess (to one standing by). How is that, sir ?

Student (aside).

Hush !

Dead.

The reader capable of appreciating beauty, passion, pathos, cannot fail to recognise all these in the foregoing extracts, and the same high qualities distinguish the other dramatic scenes. At the close, the monk is tried by court-martial and condemned to be shot ; and behold above the heads of the Austrian platoon, drawn out for his execution, the vision of a United Italy—the dream of so many martyrs.

Balder appeared some years after the publication of the *Roman*, and was not nearly so well received by the critics. In truth, the gentlemen of the press did not seem to know very well what to make of this new candidate for their suffrages ; and as abuse of the book was easier than laborious inquiries into its purport and meaning, it was abused more vigorously and universally than almost any other poetical effort of our time. And it must at once be admitted that *Balder* is very singular, puzzling, and obscure. It lacks the action, rapidity, and healthy human freshness of the *Roman*. Nor is it written in the same vivid, simple English. The actors are few—*Balder*, a poet ; *Amy*, his wife ; *Dr. Paul*, a medical man ; an artist ; a servant—these are all. There is no action in it, and with the exception of Scene xxiv., in

which the poet and his wife pass out into the fields, the whole tragedy transacts itself in-doors. Balder is continually writing or musing in his study, and continually through the open door comes the voice of Amy—Balder musing on his coming poetic greatness to which nature had consented, to which the elements had set their seals—Amy wailing of loneliness, of the departure of love, of her dead child, of stagnant days and nights, and madness creeping nearer and nearer. There is the hard selfish soliloquy of the proud unamiable man, alternating with the sigh of the broken-hearted woman and the sound of her falling tears. The book is designed to show how fatally the egotism of genius clouds and dwarfs the moral nature; how in the fierce thirst for power love dies out, and the nature is left with the strength of an archangel and the heartlessness and loneliness of a devil. But the book is far too long, and the lesson might have been enforced after some less painful fashion. Amy's tortures are lingering and long-drawn-out; she is broken as it were upon a slow wheel. Balder himself is fretful, unsocial, incomprehensible—and a considerable bit of a prig as well. His soliloquies are with himself alone. At his open window or at his study table he will talk by the hour about his feelings; his ambitions; of "his having struck off one from the weary score of human tasks;" of his intention to make "his staff the solar centre of creation;" and of his "early-planned, long-meditated, and slowly-written epic." He is a monstrosity, and that most detestable of all monstrosities—polite, silvery-tongued as Belial, who will never get into a healthy human anger with any one; who will subtilize, argue, give a thousand exquisite reasons for everything, and having made up his mind beforehand will take his own way in the end. He will not get angry with you, he will sublimely pity you like a god. He may be cruel, but he is always pleasant of speech. Of Balder one does not know what to think, one cannot conceive what motives actuate him, one cannot forecast his conduct for a moment. He is utterly and hatefully inexplicable; and when at the close, like some rudderless ship whose course is a series of accidents, he drifts into murder or appears about to drift into it, you read in a sort of stupid protesting bewilderment. Altogether, *Balder* is one of the most painful of books. There is in it an atmosphere of stagnant formless woe, a crude misty misery, a selfishness that might be felt; in reading it you grope, as it were, through some solid breathless gloom. And yet if any one would form a just estimate of the power and originality of Mr. Dobell's genius, of the swift-cleaving character of his intellect, to this book he must come and endure its pain. With all its gloom and horror I do not know where else you will meet such sudden, unexpected, exquisite sweetness; such radiant sunniness of nature; such lovely lyrical trills, like the carol of a bird from the blossomed apple-tree in the orchard heard through the silence of a house in which a dead man is lying; such strokes of sharp pathos at which the printed page disappears to slowly glimmer back. Out of the heavy surrounding gloom Amy breaks into sudden song—

Then came the cowslip
Like a dancer in the fair,
She spread her little mat of green
And on it danced she.

With a fillet bound about her brow,
A fillet round her happy brow,
A golden fillet round her brow,
And rubies in her hair.

There is nothing in Marlow, Webster, or Dekker, more frightful than the close of this book. Balder is reading a scroll and talking to himself of his "unthought of glory;" Amy rises suddenly, snatches the scroll from his hand and throws it out of the open window into the moat.

Amy.

Glory? see!

Can it light up that pit down where I dwell
Out of the light of day and of the stars?
Out of the light o' the grave:—Ay, the dull earth
Below the dead is not so black with night
But the great day shall stir it! Is it well
That the dull earth below the dead hath life
And I am dark for ever? Is that well?
Is that well, husband? Husband, is it well?
Oh yes, thy glory; yes—he must have glory,
Yes, he must have his glory; he can stand
All day in the sun, but he must have his glory!
He has walked here up in the sunshine world,
He has been in the wind and the sweet rain.
And none cried "Upset the cup o' the honey time,
Upset the cup o' the honey time,"
And I am empty and dry.

* * * * *

I am his wife! This is my murderer!
Make way, make way, this is a murderer!
I am in hell, slain, lost, robbed, murdered, mad,
He did it, he!

Balder.

He knows it.

Amy.

Mad, mad, mad.

(*Sinking in his arms in a swoon.*)

Balder.

Now, now, my soul! it must be ere she wake,
I will bear this alone; she shall not know
The hand that strikes—This hand! Nor man nor fiend
Would do thee harm but me! Now—now—yet oh!
That it must be now. That it had been while
The fire of madness burned her, and she swelled
And blackened like a burning house, once home
Now but a house in flames.

* * * * *

(*Begins to divest her.*)

Heaving breast,

How oft have I undone thy weeds as now,
And very softly, very silently
As now—and not more tenderly, no not.
More tenderly, no, on thy bridal night.
No, not more tenderly. But oh, you heavens,
Wherefore and wherefore?

Here under her bosom

It cannot fail her. Hide thee, hide thee, Heart,
Poor fluttering bird, why wilt thou stir the lilies?

Dost thou not know me, who I am? Soft, soft;
 Thou hast so often struggled in mine arms
 Asleep, and I have wakened thee with kisses,
 I pray thee do not struggle now, my child,
 I cannot rouse thee from this dream.

Oh, God,

If she should clasp her hands upon her breast
 And moan! If she should feel through this thin trance
 The cold steel ere it pierce, and call on me
 For help!—but I will hold thee fast, my child,
 Fast in these arms, altho' thou start and cry,
 And shield thee from myself! If I strike ill
 The first stroke, and she wake and strive for life;
 If she should ope her eyes but once too late
 And go forth to believe for ever more
 I struck unkindly—

(*Throws a kerchief over her face.*)

No, she shall not see me,
 And now thy living face is gone for ever,
 And I have murdered thee before thy time.
 Nor God, nor demon could have wrung from me
 This moment, the last moment, only thou,
 Oh, only thou—

(*Frantically lifts the kerchief.*)

Amy.

Thou there, all there!
 Help me, my child. Ay, look so beautiful,
 'Tis well; if this be heaven this is not
 To kill thee—Now.

The power of this is indisputable, but how it all comes about, how it evolves itself out of the body of the work, are not a little obscure.

England in Time of War is Mr. Dobell's latest work, and it is in many respects his homeliest, simplest, and most delightful. There is nothing of the enormous egotism of *Balder* about it, because from the nature of the cases it deals with a variety of characters, and touches on a multitude of interests. The book is mainly composed of lyrics, but they are dramatic lyrics; only on one or two occasions the writer speaks in his proper person, and an attempt is made to give expression to every rank of English society in its relation to the war then raging. In carrying out his idea the writer necessarily passes from cot to castle, from milkmaid to merchant. The war lies at the centre of each of these lyrics, but there is remarkable variety in the people who utter them. There is the market-wife who mixes Bible and newspaper, and who imagines that the armies of Israel fought with bayonets and wore scarlet; the merriment of the recruits' ball; the wail of the mad woman whose lover has been slain; the sorely-wounded officer slowly becoming convalescent, as he is wheeled through the sunshine and over the primroses of English spring. In these little songs there are for the most part an abounding free-flowing music, a light airy gracefulness of touch, a sunny playfulness at times which is almost humour, a homeliness and sincerity of pathos which needs no fine words. Some of the humblest, dealing with milkmaids and broken-hearted dying farmers, are more poetical than the ambitious soliloquies in *Balder*.

Here is an exquisite lyric which has all the charm, simplicity, and colour of an old ballad:—

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine,
Oh, Keith of Ravelston
The sorrows of thy line !

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill
And thro' the silver meads.

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she !

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine !
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

Year after year, when Andrew came
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine ;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger ! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

Step out these steps, where Andrew stood—
Why blanch thy cheek for fear ?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I bear !

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine ;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line !

In this little poem are not the palpable and the impalpable, the past and the present, subtly intermixed like day and night in twilight ?

If a man's literary success be judged by the number of editions his works have reached, and the number of readers he has secured, then, when compared with many of his contemporaries, Mr. Dobell's literary success does not seem considerable. And, unquestionably, every sensible man must consider that popularity is an important element in literary success. If you sing a song in public, and if no one will listen to your singing, as a public singer you have most certainly failed. If you say that you don't care whether people listen or not, then why sing in public at all? why not confine your melodious utterance to your private apartment, and dedicate it to your own private delight? The *Roman* and *Balder* have reached second editions, *England in Time of War* is yet in its first; Mr. Tupper is at present advertising the Bijou Edition of *Proverbial Philosophy*, being something like the hundred and twentieth thousand. I do not put these two statements together to point a barren sneer at Mr. Tupper—that has been a great deal too much the custom of late, and many of the writers who laugh the loudest at *Proverbial Philosophy* would have been extremely puzzled to have written it—but I bring them together to show that poetry of the highest class may not find a public, while poetry of a far lower grade is sometimes enormously successful in that respect. But then, if devotedness of attachment is in these matters to be considered and valued, the love of the six readers of the unpopular poet may outweigh the love of a hundred readers of the popular one. In the old Scottish days the King over the Water was pledged far seldomer, but, when pledged, with a million times more enthusiasm than was ever King George. In the palmy days of Byron and the *Edinburgh Review*, Wordsworth was the least read but the most intensely loved poet in England. It is curious how unpopular books are loved by the men who like them and find spiritual sustenance in them. There is, in reading such books, all the difference between dining at an ordinary and in a private room with select friends. The *Phantasties* of Mr. George MacDonald is a book but little talked about; but I happen to know some six men to whom admiration for that most exquisite of modern prose poems is a sort of bond of union. Mr. Dobell has an audience, not so large as many, but more devoted than most. Whether he is to the full aware of that devotedness, I cannot say; but I am certain, knowing his serious and noble nature, that whether his books are popular or the reverse is to him a matter of no very considerable moment. He is one of the few men who can say, and that too without the slightest suspicion of cant or insincerity, that having done his work faithfully and well—being the matter in which he has strict personal concern—he is not too anxious as to what reception his work may meet—that being more specially the concern of others.

ALEXANDER SMITH.



GRIFFITH GAUNT.

BY CHARLES READE.

CHAPTER XLI.

“YOU say the pedlar was a hundred yards behind my husband. Which of the two men was walking fastest?”

Thomas Hayes considered a moment. “Well, Dame, I think the Squire was walking rather the smartest of the two.”

“Did the pedlar seem likely to overtake him?”

“Nay. Ye see, Dame, Squire he walked straight on; but the pedlar he took both sides of the road at onst, as the saying is.”

The Prisoner. Forgive me, Thomas, but I don't know what you mean.

Hayes (compassionately). How should ye? You are never the worse for liquor, the likes of you.

The Prisoner (very keenly). Oh, he was in liquor, was he?

Hayes. Come, Dame, you do brew good ale at Hernshaw Castle. Ye needn't go to deny that; for, Lord knows, 'tis no sin; and a poor fellow may be jolly; yet not, to say, drunk.

The Judge (sternly). Witness, attend, and answer directly.

The Prisoner. Nay, my lord, 'tis a plain country body, and means no ill. Good Thomas, be so much my friend as to answer plainly. Was the man drunk or sober?

Hayes. All I know is he went from one side o' the road to t'other.

The Prisoner. Thomas Hayes, as you hope to be saved eternally, was the pedlar drunk or sober?

Hayes. Well, if I must tell on my neighbour or else be damned, then that there pedlar was as drunk as a lord.

Here, notwithstanding the nature of the trial, the laughter was irrepressible, and Mrs. Gaunt sat quietly down (for she was allowed a seat), and said no more.

To the surgeon, who had examined the body officially, she put this question, “Did you find any signs of violence?”

The Surgeon. None whatever; but, then, there was nothing to go by, except the head and the bones.

The Prisoner. Have you experience in this kind? I mean, have you inspected murdered bodies?

The Surgeon. Yes.

The Prisoner. How many?

The Surgeon. Two before this.

The Prisoner. Oh! pray, pray, do not say “before this.” I have great hopes no murder at all hath been committed here. Let us keep to plain cases. Please you describe the injuries in those two undoubted cases.

The Surgeon. In Wellyn's the skull was fractured in two places. In

Sherrett's the right arm was broken, and there were some contusions on the head; but the cause of death was a stab that penetrated the lungs.

The Prisoner. Suppose Wellyn's murderers had thrown his body into the water, and the fishes had so mutilated it as they have this one, could you by your art have detected the signs of violence?

The Surgeon. Certainly. The man's skull was fractured. Wellyn's I mean.

The Prisoner. I put the same question with regard to Sherrett's.

The Surgeon. I cannot answer it: here the lungs were devoured by the fishes: no signs of lesion can be detected in an organ that has ceased to exist.

The Prisoner. This is too partial. Why select one injury out of several? What I ask is this: could you have detected violence in Sherrett's case, although the fishes had eaten the flesh of his body.

The Surgeon. I answer that the minor injuries of Sherrett would have been equally perceptible; to wit, the bruises on the head, and the broken arm; but not the perforation of the lungs; and that it was killed the man.

Prisoner. Then, so far as you know, and can swear, about murder, more blows have always been struck than one, and some of the blows struck in Sherrett's case, and Wellyn's, would have left traces that fishes' teeth could not efface?

The Surgeon. That is so, if I am to be peevishly confined to my small and narrow experience of murdered bodies. But my general knowledge of the many ways in which life may be taken by violence——

The Judge stopped him, and said that could hardly be admitted as evidence against his actual experience.

The prisoner put a drawing of the castle, the mere, and the bridge, into the witnesses' hands, and elicited that it was correct, and also the distances marked on it. They had, in fact, been measured exactly for her.

The hobnailed shoes were produced, and she made some use of them, particularly in cross-examining Jane Banister.

Prisoner. Look at those shoes. Saw you ever the like on Mr. Gaunt's feet?

Jane. That I never did, Dame.

Prisoner. What, not when he came into the kitchen on the 15th October?

Jane. Nay, he was booted. By the same token I saw the boy a cleaning of them for supper.

Prisoner. Those boots, when you broke into his room, did you find them?

Jane. Nay, when the man went his boots went; as reason was. We found nought of his but a soiled glove.

Prisoner. Had the pedlar boots on?

Jane. Alas! who ever see'd a booted pedlar?

Prisoner. Had he these very shoes on. Look at them.

Jane. I couldn't say for that. He had shoon, for they did properly clatter on my bricks.

The Judge. Clatter on her bricks! What in the world does she mean?

Prisoner. I think she means on the floor of her kitchen. 'Tis a brick floor, if I remember right.

The Judge. Good woman, say, is that what you mean?

Jane. Ay, an't please you, my lord.

Prisoner. Had the pedlar a mole on his forehead?

Jane. Not that I know on. I never took so much notice of the man. But, la, Dame, now I look at you, I don't believe you was ever the one to murder our master.

Wiltshire. We don't want your opinion. Confine yourself to facts.

Prisoner. You heard me rating my husband on that night: what was it I said about the constables—do you remember?

Jane. La, Dame, I wouldn't ask that if I was in your place.

Prisoner. I am much obliged to you for your advice; but answer me—truly.

Jane. Well, if you will have it, I think you said they should be here in the morning. But, indeed, good gentlemen, her bark was always worse than her bite, poor soul.

The Judge. Here. That meant at Hernshaw Castle, I presume.

Jane. Ay, my lord, an' if it please your lordship's honour's worship.

Mrs. Gaunt, husbanding the patience of the court, put no questions at all to several witnesses; but she cross-examined Mrs. Ryder very closely. This was necessary; for Ryder was a fatal witness. Her memory had stored every rash and hasty word the poor lady had uttered, and, influenced either by animosity or prejudice, she put the worst colour on every suspicious circumstance. She gave her damnable evidence neatly, and clearly, and with a seeming candour and regret, that disarmed suspicion.

When her examination in chief concluded, there was but one opinion amongst the bar, and the auditors in general, viz., that the maid had hung the mistress.

Mrs. Gaunt herself felt she had a terrible antagonist to deal with, and, when she rose to cross-examine her, she looked paler than she had done all through the trial.

She rose, but seemed to ask herself how to begin: and her pallor and her hesitation, while they excited some little sympathy, confirmed the unfavourable impression. She fixed her eyes upon the witness, as if to discover where she was most vulnerable. Mrs. Ryder returned her gaze calmly. The court was hushed; for it was evident a duel was coming between two women of no common ability.

The opening rather disappointed expectation.] Mrs. Gaunt seemed, by her manner, desirous to propitiate the witness.

Prisoner (very civilly). You say you brought Thomas Leicester to my bedroom on that terrible night?

Ryder (civilly). Yes, madam.

Prisoner. And you say he stayed there half-an-hour?

Ryder. Yes, madam; he did.

Prisoner. May I inquire how you know he stayed just half an hour?

Ryder. My watch told me that, madam. I brought him to you at a quarter past eleven: and you did not ring for me till a quarter to twelve.

Prisoner. And, when I did ring for you, what then?

Ryder. I came, and took the man away, by your orders.

Prisoner. At a quarter to twelve?

Ryder. At a quarter to twelve.

Prisoner. This Leicester was a lover of yours?

Ryder. Not he.

Prisoner. Oh, fie! Why, he offered you marriage: it went so far as that.

Ryder. Oh, that was before you set him up pedlar.

Prisoner. 'Twas so; but he was single for your sake, and he renewed his offer that very night. Come, do not forswear yourself about a trifle.

Ryder. Trifle, indeed! Why, if he did, what has that to do with the murder? You'll do yourself no good, madam, by going about so.

Wiltshire. Really, madam, this is beside the mark.

Prisoner. If so, it can do your case no harm. My lord, you did twice interrupt the learned counsel, and forbade him to lead his witnesses; I not once, for I am for stopping no mouths, but sifting all to the bottom. Now, I implore you to let me have fair play in my turn, and an answer from this slippery witness.

The Judge. Prisoner, I do not quite see your drift; but God forbid you should be hampered in your defence. Witness, by virtue of your oath, reply directly. Did this pedlar offer you marriage that night after he left the prisoner?

Ryder. My lord, he did.

Prisoner. And confided to you he had orders to kill Mr. Gaunt?

Ryder. Not he, madam: that was not the way to win me. He knew that.

Prisoner. What! did not his terrible purpose peep out all the time he was making love to you?

No reply.

Prisoner. You had the kitchen to your two selves? Come, don't hesitate.

Ryder. The other servants were gone to bed. You kept the man so late.

Prisoner. Oh, I mean no reflection on your prudence. You went out of doors with your wooer; just to see him off?

Ryder. Not I. What for? I had nobody to make away with. I just opened the door for him, bolted it after him, and went straight to my bedroom.

Prisoner. How long had you been there when you heard the cry for help?

Ryder. Scarce ten minutes. I had not taken my stays off.

Prisoner. If you and Thomas Hayes speak true, that gives half an hour you were making love with the murderer after he left me. Am I correct?

The witness now saw whither she had been led, and changed her manner: she became sullen, and watched an opportunity to stab.

Prisoner. Had he a mole on his brow?

Ryder. Not that I know of.

Prisoner. Why, where were your eyes then, when the murderer saluted you at parting?

Ryder's eyes flashed; but she felt her temper tried, and governed it all the more severely. She treated the question with silent contempt.

Prisoner. But you pass for a discreet woman; perhaps you looked modestly down when the assassin saluted you?

Ryder. If he saluted me, *perhaps* I did.

Prisoner. In that case you could not see his mole; but you must have noticed his shoes. Were these the shoes he wore? Look at them well.

Ryder (after inspecting them). I do not recognise them.

Prisoner. Will you swear these were not the shoes he had on?

Ryder. How can I swear that? I know nothing about the man's shoes. If you please, my lord, am I to be kept here all day with her foolish trifling questions?

The Judge. All day, and all night too, if Justice requires it. The law is not swift to shed blood.

Prisoner. My lord and the gentlemen of the jury were here before you, and will be kept here after you. Prithee attend. Look at that drawing of Hernshaw Castle and Hernshaw Mere. Now take this pencil, and mark your bedroom on the drawing.

The pencil was taken from the prisoner, and handed to Ryder. She waited like a cat till it came close to her; then recoiled with an admirable scream. "Me handle a thing hot from the hand of a murderess! It makes me tremble all over."

This cruel stab affected the prisoner visibly. She put her hand to her bosom, and with tears in her eyes faltered out a request to the judge that she might sit down a minute.

The Judge. To be sure you may. And you, my good woman, must not run before the court. How do you know what evidence she may have in store? At present we have only heard one side. Be more moderate.

The prisoner rose promptly to her feet. "My lord, I welcome the insult that has disgusted your lordship and the gentlemen of the jury, and won me those good words of comfort." To Ryder—"What sort of a night was it?"

Ryder. Very little moon, but a clear, starry night.

Prisoner. Could you see the Mere, and the banks?

Ryder. Nay, but so much of it as faced my window.

Prisoner. Have you marked your window?

Ryder. I have.

Prisoner. Now mark the place where you heard Mr. Gaunt cry for help.

Ryder. 'Twas about here; under these trees. And that is why I could not see him: along of the shadow.

Prisoner. Possibly. Did you see me on that side the Mere?

Ryder. No.

Prisoner. What coloured dress had I on at that time?

Ryder. White satin.

Prisoner. Then you could have seen me, even among the trees, had I been on that side the Mere?

Ryder. I can't say. However, I never said you were on the very spot where the deed was done; but you were out of doors.

Prisoner. How do you know that?

Ryder. Why, you told me so yourself.

Prisoner. Then that is my evidence, not yours. Swear to no more than you know. Had my husband, to your knowledge, a reason for absconding suddenly?

Ryder. Yes, he had.

Prisoner. What was it?

Ryder. Fear of you.

Prisoner. Nay, I mean, had he not something to fear, something quite different from that I am charged with?

Ryder. You know best, madam. I would gladly serve you, but I cannot guess what you are driving at.

The prisoner was taken aback by this impudent reply. She hesitated to force her servant to expose a husband, whom she believed to be living: and her hesitation looked like discomfiture; and Ryder was victorious in that encounter.

By this time they were both thoroughly embittered, and it was war to the knife.

Prisoner. You listened to our unhappy quarrel that night?

Ryder. Quarrel! madam, 'twas all on one side.

Prisoner. How did you understand what I said to him about the constables?

Ryder. Constables! I never heard you say the word.

Prisoner. Oh!

Ryder. Neither when you threatened him with your knife to me; nor when you threatened him to his face.

Prisoner. Take care: you forget that Jane Bannister heard me; was her ear nearer the keyhole than yours?

Ryder. Jane! she is a simpleton. You could make her think she heard anything. I noticed you put the words in her mouth.

Prisoner. God forgive you, you naughty woman. You had better have spoken the truth.

Ryder. My lord, if you please, am I to be miscalled—by a murderess?

The Judge. Come, come, this is no place for recrimination.

The prisoner now stooped and examined her papers, and took a distinct line of cross-examination.

Prisoner (with apparent carelessness). At all events, you are a virtuous woman, Mrs. Ryder?

Ryder. Yes, madam, as virtuous as yourself, to say the least.

Prisoner (still more carelessly). Married or single?

Ryder. Single, and like to be.

Prisoner. Yes, if I remember right, I made a point of that before I engaged you as my maid.

Ryder. I believe the question was put.

Prisoner. Here is the answer in your handwriting. Is not that your handwriting?

Ryder (after inspecting it). It is.

Prisoner. You came highly recommended by your last mistress, a certain Mrs. Hamilton. Here is her letter, describing you as a model.

Ryder. Well, madam, hitherto I have given satisfaction to all my mistresses, Mrs. Hamilton among the rest. My character does not rest on her word only, I hope.

Prisoner. Excuse me; I engaged you on her word alone. Now, who is this Mrs. Hamilton?

Ryder. A worshipful lady I served for eight months before I came to you. She went abroad, or I should be with her now.

Prisoner. Now cast your eye over this paper.

It was the copy of a marriage certificate between Thomas Edwards and Caroline Plunkett.

"Who is this Caroline Plunkett?"

Ryder turned very pale, and made no reply.

"I ask you who is this Caroline Plunkett?"

Ryder (faintly). Myself.

The Judge. Why, you said you were single!

Ryder. So I am; as good as single. My husband and me we parted eight years ago, and I have never seen him since.

Prisoner. Was it quite eight years ago?

Ryder. Nearly, 'twas in May, 1739.

Prisoner. But you have lived with him since.

Ryder. Never, upon my soul.

Prisoner. When was your child born?

Ryder. My child! I have none.

Prisoner. In January, 1743, you left a baby at Biggleswade, with a woman called Church—did you not?

Ryder (panting). Of course I did. It was my sister's.

Prisoner. Do you mean to call God to witness that child was not yours?

Ryder hesitated.

Prisoner. Will you swear Mrs. Church did not see you nurse that child in secret, and weep over it?

At this question the perspiration stood visible on *Ryder's* brow, her cheeks were ghastly, and her black eyes roved like some wild animal's round the court. She saw her own danger, and had no means of measuring her inquisitor's information.

"My lord, have pity on me. I was betrayed, abandoned. Why am I so tormented? I have not committed murder." So, catlike, she squealed and scratched at once.

Prisoner. What! to swear away an innocent life, is not that murder?

The Judge. Prisoner, we make allowances for your sex, and your peril, but you must not remark on the evidence at present. Examine as severely as you will, but abstain from comment till you address the jury on your defence.

Serjeant Wiltshire. My lord, I submit that this line of examination is barbarous, and travels out of the case entirely.

Prisoner. Not so, Mr. Serjeant. 'Tis done by advice of an able lawyer.

My life is in peril, unless I shake this witness's credit. To that end I show you she is incontinent, and practised in falsehood. Unchastity has been held in these courts to disqualify a female witness, hath it not, my lord?

The Judge. Hardly. But to disparage her evidence it has. And wisely; for she who loses her virtue, enters on a life of deceit; and lying is a habit that spreads from one thing to many. Much wisdom there is in ancient words. Our forefathers taught us to call a virtuous woman an honest woman, and the law does but follow in that track; still, however, leaving much to the discretion of the jury.

Prisoner. I would show her more mercy than she has shown to me. Therefore I leave that matter. Witness, be so good as to examine Mrs. Hamilton's letter, and compare it with your own. The "y's" and the "s's" are peculiar in both, and yet the same. Come, confess; Mrs. Hamilton's is a forgery. You wrote it. Be pleased to hand both letters up to my lord to compare; the disguise is but thin.

Ryder. Forgery there was none. There is no Mrs. Hamilton. (She burst into tears.) I had my child to provide for, and no man to help me! What was I to do? A servant must live.

Prisoner. Then why not let her mistress live, whose bread she has eaten? My lord, shall not this false witness be sent hence to prison for perjury?

Wiltshire. Certainly not. What woman on earth is expected to reveal her own shame upon oath? 'Twas not fair nor human to put such questions. Come, madam, leave torturing this poor creature. Show some mercy; you may need it yourself.

The Prisoner. Sir, 'tis not mercy I ask, but justice according to law. But since you do me the honour to make me a request, I will comply, and ask her but one question more. Describe my apartment into which you showed Thomas Leicester that night. Begin at the outer door.

Ryder. First there is the anteroom; then the boudoir; then there's your bedchamber.

Prisoner. Into which of those three did you show Thomas Leicester?

Ryder. Into the anteroom.

Prisoner. Then why did you say it was in my chamber I entertained him?

Ryder. Madam, I meant no more than that it was your private apartment upstairs.

Prisoner. You contrived to make the gentlemen think otherwise.

The Judge. That you did. 'Tis down in my notes that she received the pedlar in her bedchamber.

Ryder (sobbing). God is my witness I did not mean to mislead your lordship: and I ask my lady's pardon for not being more exact in that particular.

At this the prisoner bowed to the judge, and sat down with one victorious flash of her grey eye at the witness, who was in an abject condition of fear, and hung all about the witness-box limp as a wet towel.

Serjeant Wiltshire saw she was so thoroughly cowed she would be apt to truckle, and soften her evidence to propitiate the prisoner; so he asked her but one question.

"Were you and the prisoner on good terms?"

Ryder. On the best of terms. She was always a good and liberal mistress to me.

Wiltshire. I will not prolong your sufferings. You may go down.

The Judge. But you will not leave the court till this trial is ended. I have grave doubts whether I ought not to commit you.

Unfortunately for the prisoner, Ryder was not the last witness for the crown. The others that followed were so manifestly honest that it would have been impolitic to handle them severely. The prisoner, therefore, put very few questions to them; and, when the last witness went down, the case looked very formidable.

The evidence for the crown being now complete, the judge retired for some refreshment; and the court buzzed like a hum of bees. Mrs. Gaunt's lips and throat were parched; and her heart quaked.

A woman of quite the lower order thrust forth a great arm, and gave her an orange. Mrs. Gaunt thanked her sweetly: and the juice relieved her throat.

Also this bit of sympathy was of good omen, and did her heart good.

She buried her face in her hands, and collected all her powers for the undertaking before her. She had noted down the exact order of her topics, but no more.

The judge returned; the crier demanded silence; and the prisoner rose, and turned her eyes modestly but steadily upon those who held her life in their hands: and, true to the wisdom of her sex, the first thing she aimed at was—to please.

"My lord, and you gentlemen of the jury, I am now to reply to a charge of murder, founded on a little testimony, and a good deal of false, but, I must needs say, reasonable conjecture.

"I am innocent; but unlike other innocent persons who have stood here before me, I have no man to complain of.

"The magistrates, who committed me, proceeded with due caution and humanity: they weighed my hitherto unspotted reputation, and were in no hurry to prejudge me; here, in this court, I have met with much forbearance; the learned counsel for the crown has made me groan under his abilities; that was his duty; but he said from the first he would do nothing hard, and he has kept his word; often he might have stopped me; I saw it in his face: but, being a gentleman and a Christian, as well as a learned lawyer, methinks he said to himself, 'this is a poor gentlewoman pleading for her life; let her have some little advantage.' As for my lord, he has promised to be my counsel, so far as his high station, and duty to the crown, admit; and he has supported and consoled me more than once with words of justice, that would not, I think, have encouraged a guilty person, but have comforted and sustained me beyond expression. So then I stand here, the victim, not of man's injustice, but of deceitful appearances, and of honest, but hasty and loose conjectures.

"These conjectures I shall now sift, and hope to show you how hollow they are.

"Gentlemen, in every disputed matter the best way, I am told, is to begin by settling what both parties are agreed in, and so to narrow the matter. To use that method, then, I do heartily agree with the learned counsel that murder is a heinous crime, and that, black as it is at the best, yet it is still more detestable when 'tis a wife that murders her husband, and robs her child of a parent who can never be replaced.

"I also agree with him that circumstantial evidence is often sufficient to convict a murderer; and, indeed, were it not so, that most monstrous of crimes would go oftenest unpunished: since, of all culprits, murderers do most shun the eyes of men in their dark deeds, and so provide beforehand that direct testimony to their execrable crime there shall be none. Only herein I am advised to take a distinction that escaped the learned serjeant. I say that first of all it ought to be proved directly, and to the naked eye, that a man has been murdered; and then, if none saw the crime done, let circumstances point out the murderer.

"But here, they put the cart before the horse; they find a dead body, with no marks of violence whatever; and labour to prove by circumstantial evidence alone that this mere dead body is a murdered body. This, I am advised, is bad in law, and contrary to general precedents; and the particular precedents for it are not examples, but warnings; since both the prisoners so rashly convicted were proved innocent, after their execution."

(The judge took a note of this distinction.)

"Then, to go from principles to the facts, I agree and admit that, in a moment of anger, I was so transported out of myself as to threaten my husband's life before Caroline Ryder. But afterwards, when I saw him face to face, then, that I threatened him with *violence*, that I deny. The fact is I had just learned that he had committed a capital offence: and what I threatened him with was the law. This was proved by Jane Bannister. She says she heard me say the constables should come for him next morning. For what? to murder him?"

The Judge. Give me leave, madam. Shall you prove Mr. Gaunt had committed a capital offence?

Prisoner. I could, my lord; but I am loth to do it. For, if I did, I should cast him into worse trouble than I am in myself.

The Judge (shaking his head gravely). Let me advise you to advance nothing you are not able and willing to prove.

The Prisoner. Then, I confine myself to this: it was proved by a witness for the crown that in the dining-room I threatened my husband to his face with the law. Now this threat, and not that other extravagant threat, which he never heard, you know, was clearly the threat which caused him to abscond that night.

"In the next place, I agree with the learned counsel that I was out of doors at one o'clock that morning. But if he will use me as **HIS WITNESS** in that matter, then he must not pick and choose and mutilate my testimony. Nay, let him take the whole truth, and not just so much as he can square with the indictment. Either believe me, that I was out of doors praying, or do not believe me that I was out of doors at all.

"Gentlemen, hear the simple truth. You may see in the map, on the south side of Hernshaw Castle, a grove of large fir-trees. 'Tis a reverend place, most fit for prayer and meditation. Here I have prayed a thousand times and more before the fifteenth October. Hence 'tis called 'the Dame's haunt,' as I shall prove, that am the dame 'tis called after.

"Let it not seem incredible to you that I should pray out of doors in my grove, on a fine clear starry night. For ought I know, Protestants may pray only by the fireside. But, remember, I am a Catholic. We are not so contracted in our praying. We do not confine it to little comfortable places. Nay, but for seventeen hundred years and more we have prayed out of doors as much as in doors. And this our custom is no fit subject for a shallow sneer. How does the learned serjeant know that, beneath the vault of heaven at night, studded with those angelic eyes, the stars, is an unfit place to bend the knee, and raise the soul in prayer? Has he ever tried it?"

This sudden appeal to a learned and eminent, but by no means devotional, serjeant, so tickled the gentlemen of the bar, that they burst out laughing with singular unanimity.

This dashed the prisoner, who had not intended to be funny; and she hesitated, and looked distressed.

The Judge. Proceed, madam; these remarks of yours are singular, but quite pertinent, and no fit subject for ridicule. Gentlemen, remember the public looks to you for an example.

Prisoner. My lord, 'twas my fault for making that personal, which should be general. But women they are so. 'Tis our foible. I pray the good serjeant to excuse me.

"I say, then, generally, that when the sun retires, then earth fades, but heaven comes out in tenfold glory: and I say the starry firmament at night is a temple not built with hands, and the bare sight of it subdues the passions, chastens the heart, and aids the soul in prayer surprisingly. My lord, as I am a Christian woman, 'tis true that my husband had wronged me cruelly and broken the law. 'Tis true that I raged against him, and he answered me not again. 'Tis true, as that witness said, that my bark is worse than my bite. I cooled, and then felt I had forgotten the wife and the Christian in my wrath. I repented, and, to be more earnest in my penitence, I did go and pray out o' doors beneath those holy eyes of heaven that seemed to look down with chaste reproach on my ungoverned heat. I left my fireside, my velvet cushions, and all the little comforts made by human hands, that adorn our earthly dwellings, but distract our eyes from God."

Some applause followed this piece of eloquence, exquisitely uttered. It was checked, and the prisoner resumed, with an entire change of manner.

"Gentlemen, the case against me is like a piece of rotten wood varnished all over. It looks fair to the eye; but will not bear handling.

"As example of what I say, take three charges on which the learned serjeant greatly relied in opening his case:

"1st. That I received Thomas Leicester in my bedroom.

"2nd. That he went hot from me after Mr. Gaunt.

"3rd. That he was seen following Mr. Gaunt with a bloody intent.

"How ugly these three proofs looked at first sight! Well, but when we squeezed the witnesses ever so little, what did those three dwindle down to?"

"1st. That I received Thomas Leicester in an anteroom, which leads to a boudoir, and that boudoir leads to my bedroom.

"2nd. That Thomas Leicester went from me to the kitchen, and there, for a good half hour, drank my ale (as it appears), and made love to his old sweetheart, Caroline Ryder, the false witness for the crown; and went abroad fresh from *her*, and not from *me*.

"3rd. That he was not (to speak strictly) seen following Mr. Gaunt, but just walking on the same road, drunk, and staggering, and going at such a rate that, as the crown's own witness swore, he could not in the nature of things overtake Mr. Gaunt, who walked quicker, and straighter too, than he.

"So then, even if a murder has been done, they have failed to connect Thomas Leicester with it, or me with Thomas Leicester. Two broken links in a chain of but three.

"And now I come to the more agreeable part of my defence. I do think there has been no murder at all.

"There is no evidence of a murder.

"A body is found with the flesh eaten by fishes, but the bones, and the head, uninjured. They swear a surgeon, who has examined the body, and certainly he had the presumption to guess it looks like a murdered body. But, being sifted, he was forced to admit that, so far as his experience of murdered bodies goes, it is not like a murdered body; for there is no bone broken, nor bruise on the head.

"Where is the body found? In the water. But water by itself is a sufficient cause of death, and a common cause too; and kills without breaking bones, or bruising the head. O, perversity of the wise! For every one creature murdered in England, ten are accidentally drowned; and they find a dead man in the water, which is as much as to say they find the slain in the arms of the slayer; yet they do not once suspect the water, but go about in search of a strange and monstrous crime.

"Mr. Gaunt's cry for help was heard *here*, if it was heard at all (which I greatly doubt), here by this clump of trees: the body was found here, hard by the bridge; which is, by measurement, one furlong and sixty paces from that clump of trees, as I shall prove. There is no current in the mere lively enough to move a body, and what there is runs the wrong way. So this disconnects the cry for help, and the dead body. Another broken link!"

"And now I come to my third defence, I say the body is not the body of Griffith Gaunt.

"The body, mutilated as it was, had two distinguishing marks: a mole on the brow, and a pair of hobnailed shoes on the feet.

"Now the advisers of the crown fix their eyes on that mole; but they turn their heads away from the hobnailed shoes. But why? Articles of raiment found on a body are legal evidence of identity. How often, my lord, in cases of murder, hath the crown relied on such particulars, especially in cases where corruption had obscured the features.

"I shall not imitate this partiality, this obstinate prejudice; I shall not

ask you to shut your eyes on the mole, as they do on the shoes, but shall meet the whole truth fairly.

"Mr. Gaunt went from my house, that morning, with boots on his feet, and with a mole on his brow.

"Thomas Leicester went the same road, with shoes on his feet, and, as I shall prove, with a mole on his brow.

"To be sure the crown witnesses did not distinctly admit this mole on him; but, you will remember, they dared not deny it on their oaths, and so run their heads into an indictment for perjury.

"But, gentlemen, I shall put seven witnesses into the box, who will all swear that they have known Thomas Leicester for years, and that he had a mole upon his left temple.

"One of these witnesses is—the mother that bore him.

"I shall then call witnesses to prove that, on the fifteenth of October, the bridge over the mere was in bad repair, and a portion of the side rail gone; and that the body was found within a few yards of that defective bridge; and then, as Thomas Leicester went that way, drunk, and staggering from side to side, you may reasonably infer that he fell into the water in passing the bridge. To show you this is possible, I shall prove the same thing has actually occurred. I shall swear the oldest man in the parish, who will depose to a similar event that happened in his boyhood. He hath said it a thousand times before to-day, and now will swear it. He will tell you that on a certain day, sixty-nine years ago, the parson of Hernshaw, the Rev. Augustus Murthwaite, went to cross this bridge at night, after carousing at Hernshaw Castle with our great-grandfather, my husband's and mine, the then proprietor of Hernshaw; and tumbled into the water; and his body was found, gnawed out of the very form of humanity by the fishes, within a yard or two of the spot where poor Tom Leicester was found, that hath cost us all this trouble. So do the same causes bring round the same events in a cycle of years. The only difference is that the parson drank his death in our dining-room, and the pedlar in our kitchen.

"No doubt, my lord, you have observed that sometimes a hasty and involuntary inaccuracy gives quite a wrong colour to a thing. I assure you I have suffered by this. It is said that the moment Mr. Atkins proposed to drag my mere, I fainted away. In this account there is an omission. I shall prove that Mr. Atkins used these words—'And, underneath that water, I undertake to find the remains of Griffith Gaunt.' Now, gentlemen, you shall understand that at this time, and indeed until the moment when I saw the shoes upon that poor corpse's feet, I was in great terror for my husband's life. How could it be otherwise? Caroline Ryder had told me she heard his cry for help. He had disappeared. What was I to think? I feared he had fallen in with robbers. I feared all manner of things. So when the lawyer said so positively he would find his body, I was overpowered. Ah, gentlemen, wedded love survives many wrongs, many angry words; I love my husband still; and when the man told me so brutally that he was certainly dead, I fainted away. I confess it. Shall I be hanged for that?

"But now, thank God, I am full of hope that he is alive, and that good hope has given me the courage to make this great effort to save my own life.

"Hitherto I have been able to contradict my accusers positively; but now I come to a mysterious circumstance that I own puzzles me. Most persons accused of murder could, if they chose, make a clean breast, and tell you the whole matter. But this is not my case. I know shoes from boots, and I know Kate Gaunt from a liar and a murderess. But, when all is said, this is still a dark mysterious business, and there are things in it I can only deal with as you do, gentlemen, by bringing my wits to bear upon them in reasonable conjecture.

"Caroline Ryder swears she heard Mr. Gaunt cry for help. And Mr. Gaunt has certainly disappeared.

"My accusers have somewhat weakened this by trying to palm off the body of Thomas Leicester on you for the body of Mr. Gaunt. But the original mystery remains, and puzzles me. I might fairly appeal to you to disbelieve the witness. She is proved incontinent, and a practised liar, and she forswore herself in this court, and my lord is in two minds about committing her. But a liar does not always lie, and, to be honest, I think she really *believes* she heard Mr. Gaunt cry for help, for she went straight to his bedroom; and that looks as if she really thought she heard his voice. But a liar may be mistaken. Do not forget that. Distance affects the voice: and I think the voice she heard was Thomas Leicester's, and the place it came from higher up the mere.

"This, my notion, will surprise you less when I prove to you that Leicester's voice bore a family likeness to Mr. Gaunt's. I shall call two witnesses who have been out shooting with Mr. Gaunt and Tom Leicester, and have heard Leicester halloo in the wood, and taken it for Mr. Gaunt.

"Must I tell you the whole truth? This Leicester has always passed for an illegitimate son of Mr. Gaunt's father. He resembled my husband in form, stature, and voice: he had the Gaunt mole, and has often spoken of it by that name. My husband forgave him many faults for no other reason,—and I bought his wares and filled his pack for no other reason,—than this; that he was my husband's brother by nature, though not in law. '*HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE.*'

"Ah, that is a royal device; yet how often in this business have the advisers of the crown forgotten it?

"My lord, and gentlemen of the jury, I return from these conjectures to the indisputable facts of my defence.

"Mr. Gaunt may be alive, or he may be dead. He was certainly alive on the fifteenth October, and it lies on the crown to prove him dead, and not on me to prove him alive. But as for the body that forms the subject of this indictment, it is the body of Thomas Leicester, who was seen on the sixteenth October, at one in the morning, drunk and staggering, and making for Hernshaw-bridge, which leads to his mother's house; and on all his former visits to Hernshaw Castle he went on to his mother's, as I shall prove. This time, he never reached her, as I shall prove; but on his way to her did

meet his death, by the will of God, and no fault of man or woman, in Hernshaw Mere.

"Swear Sarah Leicester."

The Judge. I think you say you have several witnesses?

Prisoner. More than twenty, my lord.

The Judge. We cannot possibly dispose of them this evening. We will hear your evidence to-morrow. Prisoner, this will enable you to consult with your legal advisers, and let me urge upon you to prove, if you can, that Mr. Gaunt has a sufficient motive for hiding and not answering Mr. Atkins's invitation to inherit a large estate. Some such proof as this is necessary to complete your defence: and I am sorry to see you have made no mention of it in your address, which was otherwise able.

Prisoner. My lord, I think I can prove my own innocence without casting a slur upon my husband.

The Judge. You think? when your life is at stake. Be not so mad as to leave so large a hole in your defence, if you can mend it. Take advice.

He said this very solemnly; then rose and left the court.

Mrs. Gaunt was conveyed back to prison, and there was soon prostrated by the depression that follows an unnatural excitement.

Mr. Houseman found her on a sofa, pale and dejected, and clasping the gaoler's wife convulsively, who applied hartshorn to her nostrils.

He proved but a Job's comforter. Her defence, creditable as it was to a novice, seemed wordy and weak to him, a lawyer: and he was horrified at the admissions she had made. In her place he would have admitted nothing he could not thoroughly explain.

He came to insist on a change of tactics.

When he saw her sad condition, he tried to begin by consoling, and encouraging her. But his own serious misgivings unfitted him for this task, and very soon, notwithstanding the state she was in, he was almost scolding her for being so mad as to withstand the judge, and set herself against his advice. "There," said he, "my lord kept his word, and became counsel for you. 'Close that gap in your defence,' says he, 'and you will very likely be acquitted.' 'Nay,' says you, 'I prefer to chance it.' What madness! what injustice!"

"Injustice! to whom?"

"To whom? why, to yourself."

"What, may I not be unjust to myself?"

"Certainly not; you have no right to be unjust to anybody. Don't deceive yourself; there is no virtue in this: it is mere miserable weakness. What right have you to peril an innocent life merely to screen a malefactor from just obloquy?"

"Alas!" said Mrs. Gaunt, "'tis more than obloquy. They will kill him; they will brand him with a hot iron."

"Not unless he is indicted: and who will indict him? Sir George Neville must be got to muzzle the attorney-general, and the Lancashire jade will not move against him, for you say they are living together."

"Of course they are; and, as you say, why should I screen him? But

'twill not serve; who can combat prejudice? If what I have said does not convince them, an angel's voice would not. Sir, I am a Catholic, and they will hang me. I shall die miserably, having exposed my husband, who loved me once, oh! so dearly. I trifled with his love. I deserve it all."

"You will not die at all, if you will only be good and obedient, and listen to wiser heads. I have subpoenaed Caroline Ryder as your witness, and given her a hint how to escape an indictment for perjury. You will find her supple as a glove."

"Call a rattlesnake for my witness?"

"I have drawn her fangs. You will also call Sir George Neville, to prove he saw Gaunt's picture at the 'Packhorse,' and heard the other wife's tale. Wiltshire will object to this as evidence, and say why don't you produce Mercy Vint herself. Then you will call me to prove I sent the subpoena to Mercy Vint. Come now; I cannot eat or sleep till you promise me."

Mrs. Gaunt sighed deeply. "Spare me," said she, "I am worn out. Oh that I could die before the trial begins again."

Houseman saw the signs of yielding, and persisted. "Come, promise now," said he. "Then you will feel better."

"I will do whatever you bid me," said she. "Only, if they let me off, I will go into a convent. No power shall hinder me."

"You shall go where you like, except to the gallows. Enough, 'tis a promise, and I never knew you break one. Now I can eat my supper. You are a good obedient child, and I am a happy attorney."

"And I am the most miserable woman in all England."

"Child," said the worthy lawyer, "your spirits have given way, because they were strung so high. You need repose. Go to bed now, and sleep twelve hours. Believe me, you will wake another woman."

"Ah! would I could!" cried Mrs. Gaunt, with all the eloquence of despair.

Houseman murmured a few more consoling words, and then left her, after once more exacting a promise that she would receive no more visits, but go to bed directly. She was to send all intruders to him at the "Angel."

Mrs. Gaunt proceeded to obey his orders, and though it was but eight o'clock, she made preparations for bed, and then went to her nightly devotions.

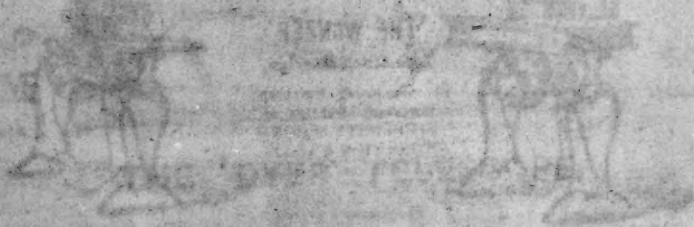
She was in sore trouble; and earthly trouble turns the heart heavenwards. Yet it was not so with her. The deep languor that oppressed her, seemed to have reached her inmost soul. Her beads, falling one by one from her hand, denoted the number of her supplications; but, for once, they were *preces sine mente dictæ*. Her faith was cold, her belief in Divine justice was shaken for a time. She began to doubt and to despond. That bitter hour, which David has sung so well, and Bunyan, from experience, has described in his biography as well as in his novel, sat heavy upon her, as it had on many a true believer before her. So deep was the gloom, so paralysing the languor, that at last she gave up all endeavour to utter words of prayer. She placed her crucifix at the foot of the wall, and laid herself down on the ground and kissed His feet,



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THE FLORENCE SERVICE COMPANY
 11 FLORENCE STREET, N.Y.

then drawing back, gazed upon that effigy of the mortal sufferings of our Redeemer.

"O anima Christiana, respice vulnera :
Patientis, sanguinem morientis,
Precem redemptionis nostræ."

She had lain thus a good half-hour, when a gentle tap came to the door.

"Who is that?" said she.

"Mrs. Menteith," the gaoler's wife replied, softly, and asked leave to come in.

Now this Mrs. Menteith had been very kind to her, and stoutly maintained her innocence. Mrs. Gaunt rose, and invited her in.

"Madam," said Mrs. Menteith, "what I come for, there is a person below who much desires to see you."

"I beg to be excused," was the reply. "He must go to my solicitor at the 'Angel,' Mr. Houseman."

Mrs. Menteith retired with that message, but in about five minutes returned to say that the young woman declined to go to Mr. Houseman, and begged hard to see Mrs. Gaunt. "And, dame," said she, "if I were you I'd let her come in; 'tis the honestest face, and the tears in her soft eyes, at you denying her, 'Oh dear, dear,' said she, 'I cannot tell my errand to any but her.'"

"Well, well," said Mrs. Gaunt; "but what is her business?"

"If you ask me, I think her business is your business. Come, dame, do see the poor thing; she is civil spoken, and she tells me she has come all the way out of Lancashire o' purpose."

Mrs. Gaunt recoiled, as if she had been stung.

"From Lancashire?" said she, faintly.

"Ay, madam," said Mrs. Menteith, "and that is a long road; and a child upon her arm all the way, poor thing."

"Her name?" said Mrs. Gaunt, sternly.

"Oh, she is not ashamed of it. She gave it me directly."

"What, has she the effrontery to take my name?"

Mrs. Menteith stared at her with utter amazement. "Your name?" said she. "'Tis a simple country body, and her name is Vint—Mercy Vint."

Mrs. Gaunt was very much agitated, and said she felt quite unequal to see a stranger.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know what to do," said Mrs. Menteith. "She says she will lie at your door all night, but she will see you. 'Tis the face of a friend. She may know something. It seems hard to thrust her and her child out into the street, after their coming all the way from Lancashire."

Mrs. Gaunt stood silent awhile, and her intelligence had a severe combat with her deep repugnance to be in the same room with Griffith Gaunt's mistress (so she considered her). But a certain curiosity came to the aid of her good sense; and after all she was a brave and haughty woman, and her natural courage began to rise. She thought to herself, "What, dares she come to me all this way, and shall I shrink from her?"

She turned to Mrs. Menteith with a bitter smile, and she said, very slowly,

and clenching her white teeth, "Since you desire it, and she *insists* on it, I will receive Mistress Mercy Vint."

Mrs. Menteith went off, and in about five minutes returned ushering in Mercy Vint in a hood and travelling cloak.

Mrs. Gaunt received her standing, and with a very formal curtsy, to which Mercy made a quiet obeisance, and both women looked one another all over in a moment.

Mrs. Menteith lingered, to know what on earth this was all about; but, as neither spoke a word, and their eyes were fixed on each other, she divined that her absence was necessary, and so retired, slowly, looking very much amazed at both of them.



UP IN AN ATTIC.

HALF of a gold ring bright,
 Broken in days of old,
 One yellow curl, whose light
 Gladden'd my gaze of old,
 A heather-sprig thereto,
 Pluckt on the mountains blue,
 When, in the shade and dew,
 We roamed erratic;
 Last, an old book of song,—
 These have I treasured long,
 Up in an Attic.

Held in one little hand,
 They gleam in vain to me:
 Of Love, Fame, Fatherland,
 All that remain to me!
 Love! with thy wounded wing,
 Up the voids lessening,
 Weeping, too sad to sing!
 Fame,—dead to pity!
 Land,—that denied me bread!
 Count me as lost and dead,
 Tomb'd in the City.

Daily the busy roar
 Murmurs to me of men,
 Dashing against its shore,
 Groans the great Sea of men;
 But night by night it flows
 Slowly to strange repose,
 Calm and more calm it glows

Under the moonshine :—
Then, only then, I peer
On each old souvenir,
Shut from the sunshine.

Half of a ring of gold,
Tarnish'd and yellow now,
Broken in days of old,
Where is thy fellow now?
Upon the heart of her,
Feeling the sweet blood stir,
Still, though the mind demur,
Kept as a token.
Ah! does her heart forget?
Or, with the pain and fret,
Is that, too, broken?

Thin threads of yellow hair,
Cleft from the brow of her,
Lying so faded there,—
Why whisper now of her?
Strange lips are press'd unto
The sweet place where ye grew,
Strange fingers tremble through
The bright live tresses.
Does she remember still,—
Sobbing, and turning chill
To his caresses?

Sprig from the mountains blue,
Long left behind me now,—
Of moonlight, shade, and dew,
Why wilt remind me now?
Cruel and chill and gray,
Looming afar away,
Dark in the light of day,
Shall the hills daunt me?
My footsteps on the hill
Are overgrown,—yet still
Their echoes haunt me.

Old written book of Song,
Put with the dead away,
Wherefore wouldst *thou* prolong
Dreams that have fled away?
Thou art an eyeless skull,
Dead, fleshless, cold, and null,
Complexionless, dark, dull,

And superseded;
 Yet, in thy time of pride,
 How grandly hast thou lied
 To all who heeded!

Yea, Fame, thou barren voice,
 Shriek from the heights above.
 Let all who will rejoice
 In those false lights above!
 When all are false save you,
 Yet were so beauteous too,
 O Fame, canst thou be true,
 And shall I follow?
 Nay, for the heart of man
 Breaks in the dark, since Pan
 Has slain Apollo.

O Fame, thy hill looks tame,
 No vast wings flee from thence,—
 Were I to climb, O Fame,
 What could I see from thence?
 Only, afar away,
 The mountains looming gray,
 Crimson'd at close of day,
 Clouds swimming by me;
 And in my hand a ring
 And ringlet glimmering,—
 And no one nigh me!

Better the busy roar,
 Speaking to me of men,—
 Dashing against its shore,
 Groans the great sea of men.
 O Love,—thou wouldst not wait!
 O Land,—thou art desolate!
 O Fame,—to others prate
 Thy joys ecstatic!—
 Only, at evenfall,
 Watching these tokens small,
 I think about you all,
 Up in an Attic!

GARIBALDI.

(Continued from p. 277.)

I ARRIVE AT THE SCENE OF ACTION, 1860.

I COULD not sleep that night, so I turned out and went up on deck. We had left Civita Vecchia late in the afternoon; the next morning we should enter the Bay of Naples. It was a lovely night, the moon was shining full upon the Mediterranean; the paddle-wheels lashed the quiet water into phosphorescent waves; we left a bright shining track behind us. On our left lay the dark outline of the Italian coast.

That night others were afflicted with the same restlessness. The hot breath of the revolution had reached us; the Garibaldi fever had got into our veins as we approached the scene of his last triumphs. Numbers of the British legion were on board—young men of good families, with splendid new red frock-coat uniforms and silver buttons, and such swords! I soon joined a little group on the upper deck. We had all been very merry together during the voyage from Genoa; a young volunteer English officer, who had never seen a blow struck in war, was entertaining his hearers with accounts of his own prodigious valour in various civil encounters in which he had displayed his acquaintance with the noble art of self-defence to the disadvantage of bargees and blacklegs of various grades. His aspirations, I may say, were bloodthirsty: to listen to him one would have thought Bomba was his personal enemy, and the Neapolitan soldiers so many demons preparing to devastate the halls of his ancestors. We walked up and down, discussing the prospects of the war, and bringing out, each in his turn, some anecdote of personal adventure, in which, of course, number one figured at the expense of every other number; and so the night wore away.

I snatched an hour's sleep before daybreak, and at six o'clock came up on deck again. We were steaming into the Bay of Naples. The sun was glittering through the mists, and smiting the ships, the quays, the water, everything. I experienced a sense of indescribable freshness, like the blowing of a spring wind: every one seemed in the highest state of exhilaration. The French and English fleets were lying a little off the shore in that splendid and commodious harbour. We threaded our way through a wilderness of floating and densely-populated vessels, rafts, and boats of all kinds. As we approached the quay, numbers more put off. Even at that early hour several steamers were getting up steam or letting it off. Every one in Italy seemed to have come to Naples that morning, and every one seemed to be in the same state of excitement. "Garibaldi!" you heard echoed from mouth to mouth; you caught little broken bits of anecdote about the recent battle of the Volturno as you passed this or that boat. "They said he was wounded;" "A bullet went right through his hat;" "You should have seen him rally the troops!" "Diavolo! he went at them like a lion," and so forth.

There seemed no particular order when we landed; no one wanted our passports. The Neapolitan gendarmes still wore the old government uniform,

but seemed to have come over in a body and now served under the Dictator ; but they didn't seem to know what to do. Crowds flocked into the custom-house as a matter of form, and flocked out again ; the Neapolitan officials stood behind their desks as they had stood under the sleepy old government, but seemed quite bewildered with the crowds. Every now and then some trunk was seized and examined ; but the traveller was usually greeted with a solemn sort of wink, a hopeless kind of "give-it-up" nod, and the "*lascia passare*" of chronic despair.

For about a fortnight after the general's arrival, Naples was governed almost by his word of mouth—the general forbids assassination, the general will have no more robberies, the general will not suffer the mules and horses to be ill-treated, no one must be refused access to the general. Nothing was more extraordinary than the way in which Garibaldi impressed himself upon the people of Naples, until the masses of degraded and ignorant criminals which formed the lower strata of its population actually began to reflect something of his humanity and love of right. He came upon them like a revelation. He infected them with the divine contagion of his own pure and lofty instincts, and I was assured on good authority that whilst he was in Naples as the visible governor not an act of crime or violence had to be recorded. What such a fact meant, those only can judge who, like myself, were living in Naples under the government of Türr, but during the Dictator's temporary absence before Capua.

Robbery was a light thing, and murder on the quays or in the streets of daily occurrence. The courts were so disorganized and the police so inadequate that the offenders could seldom be brought to justice. I was sitting at dinner in the Toledo one afternoon when a man rushed down the street flourishing a bloody rapier—he had slain his man, and was making his escape ; the crowd parted, none dared to stop him. The cab-drivers all had clasp-knives or stilettos. One confessed to me that he had killed three men with the knife he showed me, and told me the tale of each murder ; he did not seem to think it wrong.

Travellers were not unfrequently stabbed on the quays if they refused to pay exorbitant prices for the boats. I often thought what a thread my life was hanging on as I not unfrequently found myself alone between two of these rascals, whilst they rowed me off at night to dine on board the Admiral's flag-ship *Hannibal*, which lay half a mile or more out at sea.

"Milord !" they would say : "for two you will pay double."

"I will tell you all about that," said I ; "but get on quick to the Admiral's ship, or I promise you you shall get but half."

It was not safe to walk a mile out of Naples in any direction unarmed. At night, with my brother, I frequently returned from dining at a villa up above Naples, through those charming woods which separate the town from the Camaldoli heights ; the moon was usually very bright, but the place was infested with robbers, and the very last night I passed through the wood unharmed some less fortunate adventurers were robbed and mutilated. Knowing that your driver kept a knife, it was not safe to get into a *fiacre* without a revolver or dirk of some sort, as I once found to my cost. One day, when I

had forgotten to take mine, I was very tired, and chartered a cab to bring me home. The horse was wretched, I thought we should never get back. At the end the man demanded double. I pretended not to hear, and walking briskly into the open passage tried to gain the stairs; he followed me, and seizing my arm attempted to stop me; I shook him off and tried to push by, but he got between me and the stairs and, hemming me in against the wall, drew his knife. My retreat was thus cut off, I had not much time for reflection: I was unarmed, unhappily I am not a pugilist. The reader would probably have knocked the man down at once—I didn't—I paid the money!

THE SIEGE OF CAPUA—1860.

Accompanied by my brother, who wore the uniform of her Majesty's navy, and was thus a valuable companion on such expeditions, I set out one fine autumn morning for the scene of war. We swept out of Naples at a shambling gallop in a rickety two-wheeler driven by a villainous-looking fellow who sat on the shafts; but being two to one, and having nothing valuable about us, we felt quite easy. The road bore traces of the wild times in which we were living. The artillery waggons had left their heavy ruts all along the way—a hat, a torn coat lying on the road, told of an assault and robbery here; a little pool of dark blood bore witness to an assassination, and the body might not unfrequently be found in the ditch hard by. Horses fallen and expiring beneath the weight of baggage and the sun's heat, and abandoned to their fate, lined, at intervals, most of the high roads; whilst every now and then we came across a small band of ruffians who eyed our poor vehicle and its contents, but let us pass unmolested. And now as we approached the little town of Santa Maria, enclosed in the Garibaldian camp, the booming of the cannon from Capua grew louder and louder. Nothing can describe the mad desire I felt to hasten to the spot; my brother, who had often been under fire at Palermo, took things more coolly. Presently we entered Santa Maria: I never before witnessed such a state of confusion, not even in Naples—soldiers in every possible costume down to mere rags—vehicles of every possible description down to trucks drawn by donkeys—women, some of them high-born Italian ladies, wearing the Garibaldian colours and mounted on fine chargers, and others with more patriotism than virtue—the caffès crowded with men bawling in tongues of all nations, and a Pandemonium of sound, above which rose, like thunder in a hail-storm, the heavy boom of cannon from Capua, now about two miles distant.

We were obliged to proceed on foot, but we had no passes, and the general's orders were strict that none could be admitted within the Garibaldian lines without. I went straight to General Bixio's head-quarters and demanded a pass, which was politely refused. We then made our way out of the town, guided by the sound of the cannon, determined either to persuade or outwit the sentries and penetrate into the camp. A man in a brown coat was walking before us. I walked up to him and touched his arm, he appeared frightened, and getting out his pocket-book, showed us his pass, supposing we had some authority to stop him. I nodded, as much as to say, "We are

satisfied," and attempted to converse; however, we couldn't understand each other much. I offered him some brandy, and a cordial understanding was soon established. We approached the first sentry picket—my brother, I, and the individual in brown. Brown showed his pass, we drew up together, and each taking one of his arms, we walked through with him, nodding to the sentinel in a careless manner, as who should say, "We are friends of the general and old hands at this sort of thing." The man was completely taken in, and bowed respectfully.

At the second lines we met an officer who asked us our business.

"Inglesi," replied I; "from the English admiral's ship *Hannibal*."

He took off his hat, and we took off ours and passed into the very heart of the camp. We had not gone far along the white, blinding, hot road before we were stopped by a round shot fired across our bow. We could see the walls of Capua, now about a mile distant, and the little white clouds like wool, from the batteries. Then with a whizz, the round shot, or with a hiss, the bomb-shell, would strike close by, or burst in the air above us. Three of us black spots on a white road were doubtless good marks. The Neapolitans were evidently practising at us. The individual in brown did not like it, and turned back. We reflected that a moving mark fired at a mile off was not easily hit, and so we advanced. Presently we met a young cavalry officer, and it was well we did so; he said, "You had better not go any further."

"Why?" said I; "because of the round shot?"

"Oh no," said he, kissing his hand to one as it flew harmlessly over our heads; "but in yonder wood lie the Neapolitan sharpshooters, and they will pick you off presently. Cannon and rifle are different things, you know. Come along."

There was something in this. We followed our young guide, who proved to be a student of Bologna, and, moreover, a very intelligent and patriotic volunteer.

"On yonder slope of the St. Angelo range," continued he, as we ascended the hill, "you will be beyond the reach of the guns, and we can see the disposition of the camps and the whole of Capua."

We soon gained the summit. It was indeed a picturesque sight. In the plain beneath us lay the Piedmontese troops, well clothed, well fed, their position sharply defined by their neat tents. All about them lay the poor Garibaldians, ill-clothed, ill-fed, with no tents at all, exposed to the scorching sun by day, and often lying in absolute swamps at night under a pelting rain. Beyond them shone the white town of Capua, surrounded on three sides by the winding river Volturno. The batteries were carrying on a desultory fire, and the forts from St. Angelo answered regularly. The white smoke floated away, and was blown about the skirts of the landscape.

"Is the general in the camp to-day?" I inquired.

"No," said our friend, "at Caserta."

As we descended the hill I remarked on his spurs—

"You are a cavalry officer; where is your horse?"

"Ah, he had his head carried away by a round shot at the battle of the Volturno only last week."

"That was a great fight; the English legion are just too late for it."

We stopped on a little hillock to watch the firing. Just then a shell burst at our feet, reminding us that we were again within range. As I left my post a Garibaldian sat down carelessly on the rock on which I had been standing, when a shell took him in the middle and blew him to pieces. At last we came to a straggling wood by the side of the Volturno. The trees were scared and charred with fire.

"We had hot work here," said my friend. "We began at four o'clock in the morning of the first of October. Milbitz and Medici were both driven back along the whole line. The Neapolitans fought with desperate valour. If they could only have got through our lines they would have sacked Naples. The general was at Caserta, four miles off; but the instant he heard what was going on he got into his carriage with Missori, and collecting all the men he could as he went along, drove up this white road in the thick of a murderous cross-fire from the Neapolitans. The general's carriage appeared in the midst of us at the moment our men were breaking ranks and flying in disorder. He did not get out of his carriage, he sat and gave his orders. The contrast between his coolness and the wild terror and excitement of all around him I shall never forget. It had its effect. It riveted the attention of the most scared. Presently one of his horses was taken with a round shot and plunged in death agonies, then his coachman dropped forward, shot through the heart. Then, and not till then, the general leaped out of his carriage with Missori. He had seized the right moment; and drawing his famous English sword, headed that decisive charge which turned the fortunes of the day."

At this juncture a trim and finely-disciplined regiment of Piedmontese was seen approaching us, flanked by a proportionately ragged and disorderly-looking body of Garibaldians.

"They have been under arms all day," remarked our friend. "We expect a sortie from Capua, and then we shall have another bout of it."

This raised my hopes; my ambition was to see a charge with the bayonet executed by Garibaldians against regular troops, and I stayed then as late as I could, and revisited the camp afterwards, but in vain. There was no sortie that or any other day to the end of the war. The battle of the Volturno was the last real fighting that took place. This should be remembered, and will help to explain a good deal that is discreditable to the British legion, and, in fact, to the volunteers in general. These brave fellows arrived when the fighting was done. It was their misfortune, not their fault. There was nothing to do at the camp, and so they thronged Naples; but there was nothing to do at Naples, and so they misconducted themselves. Imagine Brighton without a proper police court, in a wild state of political ferment, with five or six thousand well-disposed but idle and highly-excitabile young men turned loose upon it, and you will understand the nature of, and the excuse for those excesses which occurred daily in the hotels and in the streets of Naples. Duelling was, perhaps, never carried to a more senseless pitch than during my stay at Naples. A well-known American Filibuster boasted openly at my hotel of the number of men he had "got" in duels at Naples

with his bowie knife. The demoralization of war may be bad, but peace in time of war is far worse.

VICTOR EMMANUEL AND GENERAL GARIBALDI AT NAPLES, 1860.

The Piedmontese Cabinet, Cavouriens, Unionists, every one who held back as long as there remained a doubt of success, determined at last to make a virtue of necessity, and swallow the revolution whole. It was, however, essential both to the dignity of the royal cabinet and the safety of the movement itself that the king should be in at the death and receive in person the new crown that his illustrious subject was preparing to lay at his feet.

On the 11th of October, Victor Emmanuel passed the Neapolitan frontier with the Piedmont troops. The king slept that night at Teano, and on the next morning started for Garibaldi's head-quarters. As soon as his approach was known, the general set off with his staff, and in about an hour came in sight of the head of the Piedmontese column. The instant the king recognized him he clapped spurs to his horse, and Garibaldi doing the same, they galloped forward to meet each other. We have the account from the lips of a staff-officer. When they were within ten paces the troops on either side shouted "Long live Victor Emmanuel!" Garibaldi uncovered his head, and as the king rode up saluted him, in a voice hoarse with emotion, with the words "*Rè d'Italia!*" The king, placing his hand upon his breast and raising himself slightly in his stirrups, bowed, he then held out his hand, and clasping Garibaldi's warmly, said, "General, I thank you." The officers of either staff then mixed, whilst Garibaldi and the king rode apart, conversing for about half an hour.

From that time the part which the king played in the annexation was most unsatisfactory. He was surrounded by the regular army of the north, who hated the irregular army of the south, and by ministers who were jealous of, and opposed to Garibaldi. At a time when, in order to obtain the Neapolitan votes for the annexation of Naples, the king's popularity was even more important a thing than Garibaldi's, his own followers made him unpopular. Numbers of the ignorant people knew nothing about the king, and when asked to transfer their allegiance to him, beheld a figure very unlike that of the beloved deliverer,—a bold, defiant, cavalry officer, who did not understand their dialect, had done nothing for them, surrounded by arrogant and supercilious officials, who shot them and sent them to prison when they did wrong, and insulted them always. This unfortunate impression the king did little to dissipate. His position was a delicate one; it required more than his usual caution. He gave it less. We believe that personally he is a very brave man; the manner in which he exposed himself at Palestro made him popular throughout Italy. We believe that he appreciates the goodness without envying the greatness of Garibaldi, and that jealousy or any sense of mean rivalry is a feeling unknown to him. This is saying much, but it is saying all, and his stiff and careless behaviour in public, which I have so often seen and regretted, was alone sufficient to damp the ardour of an impressionable race like the Neapolitans.

On the king's arrival, Capua surrendered after a few hours of bombardment. As I was walking on the hills above Naples I could hear, from the incessant booming of the largest guns they possessed, that something unusual was going on. Rumours reached us in the afternoon that the king, who had before his arrival requested Garibaldi not to take Capua by storm, but to wait, had now ordered the place to be shelled. I was anxious to enter with the first troops, and see the interior of a town at the close of a siege, and immediately ordered a carriage and pair at three o'clock in the morning; but my carriage was seized by Garibaldian officers before I could gallop out of the town, and not another horse or cart was to be got that day, so I was deprived of my adventure.

On the 7th, Victor Emmanuel was to enter Naples, accompanied by Garibaldi. On the morning he had promised to review the Garibaldian troops; it would have been a graceful as it was almost a necessary act,—it was much needed to establish a good understanding between the revolutionary and the royal troops; but it was not done. That morning the king had found a new mistress in Capua, and could not be got away. The scandal was known that evening all over Naples. The Garibaldian troops had been kept four hours in the rain, expecting the king, who never came. Early in the morning the streets of Naples were densely crowded. I had the choice of several windows, but got tired of waiting, and went out to mingle with the crowd in the Toledo. As the day went on the red shirts began to disappear from the streets; the slight put upon them in the morning was pretty well known; it was known also that Garibaldi had refused to enter Naples with the king, or take part in the festivities from which his companions in arms were to be excluded. The king sent to say he was much grieved, and hoped Garibaldi would occupy a seat by his side. The general at once yielded.

The afternoon was wearing, the crowd in the Toledo was dense, it was pouring with rain. I climbed up by a lamp-post. The sky was very dark and gloomy. I looked down upon a sea of umbrellas. The course was kept clear by the Piedmont army and the national guard ranged on either side of the street. The crowd began to sway, umbrellas were smashed, the rain came down in torrents, and an open carriage preceded and followed by guards drove slowly down the Toledo. "Viva Garibaldi!" was the only cry I heard. The king looked stern and bowed stiffly. The pro-dictators of Naples and Sicily were on the king's right. Garibaldi, with his uncovered head, looked very sad and worn, and did not bow or in any way acknowledge the shouts which all his influence was unable at that moment to procure for his sovereign. They passed and the crowd closed in. As it became known that Garibaldi was in Naples the red shirts reappeared in numbers. The king went to his palace, the ex-dictator to his hotel, which was next door to mine. The whole of the Villa Reale and streets along the quays of the bay were soon densely thronged by a crowd, shouting without cessation "Viva Garibaldi!" hour after hour. The general came out on the balcony, and reminded them that his mission in Naples was accomplished, and implored them to go off to the palace and shout there. Some went, and myself amongst them, and shouted obediently, "Viva Victor Emmanuel!" The crowd was not thick,

the cries were not loud, and people constantly said "Garibaldi" by mistake. I was standing half on a car close under the royal window when it was opened, and the king surrounded by several officers stepped out. I can see him now: the well-known broad plump chest and high shoulders; the martial face, with chin held up; the eyes flashing with a stern and somewhat forbidding fire; the enormous moustache curled and tossed up on either side of the coarse *retroussé* nose. Such he appeared then, and such he appeared always. He did not even bow to the people who had called him out, but glared down upon us for a moment, and then turned to one of his officers in a rough jerking manner, and with *ennui* look of half contempt, walked in again. Then we went back to Garibaldi's hotel. It was growing dark; the crowd was as dense as ever; processions of waggons with flags, and maniacs waving torches and howling, drew up one after another, but Garibaldi refused to appear. About ten o'clock, as the noise was unabated, and the people were preparing to spend the night there in order to see him as he came out in the morning, and just as another cart with torches drew up under the window and began shouting, the window opened, and the general appeared, looking very stern. He said he was pained by these demonstrations; he should consider the slight thus offered to the king as offered to himself, and if they regarded him at all they would give heed to his wishes and disperse. Thus snubbed, with just one more "Viva!" the people went home, and the town got a little rest.

It may be asked how in so short a time Garibaldi had so entirely subjugated the affections of the most degraded population in Italy. We can only answer he made himself felt everywhere; no detail was too small for him; his ear was never turned away from the tale of distress, nor his face from any poor man. Moreover he was one whom all could reverence. He was absolutely free from the common vices which degrade our nature. He lived above the senses, and was without ambition. What seemed to others the highest effort of heroism was to him simply natural. Tried by both extremes of fortune he was tempted by neither. No disaster shook him, and no success disturbed the equilibrium of a mind, at all times perfectly calm. "I am a principle!" he would often say, "and the homage paid to me is paid to liberty!" He left his mark upon all those with whom he conversed; a look—a word was sufficient to bind a soldier to him and to his cause for life. "*Courage!*" he said in French to a young volunteer friend of mine who joined the camp whilst I was there, "*nous allons combattre pour la patrie!*" and these few simple words sustained my friend through many a tedious hour of trial and suffering. Almost every day the general visited the hospitals, where many hundreds of his sick and wounded lay. He would stay hours sitting or kneeling by their beds, sometimes himself bathing the fevered brow and moistening the parched lips. They used to say that virtue went from him to heal them; certain it is those visits did more good than all the physic. No one was neglected. He laid his hand upon the head of each, and blessed them ere he went. The eyes of the dying brightened for the last time as he passed; some forgot their wounds, and sprang from their beds to meet him. As he went forth he left indeed many hundreds of suffering bodies behind,

but he also left hearts filled through and through with the deep happiness of a high and holy love. On Sunday he used always to dine at Naples, next door to where I was living. It was, I think, the Sunday after the battle of the Volturno that I first heard him address the people. He wore his simple red shirt and grey trousers. He looked very grave, but very good and gentle, and these were some of the simple yet thrilling words which fell from his lips on that occasion :—

“In the midst of such a people as this it is unnecessary for me to excite you by any speeches to patriotism; let united Italy and Victor Emmanuel be still your motto. I do not need these demonstrations to assure me of your fidelity. We must all act; the people must arise; they must fight for liberty.”

There was nothing in what he said, but the effect was electric. He leant a little forward, with his eyes fixed earnestly on the crowd, and as he pronounced the last words he raised his hand above his head, and pointed with his finger to the sky.

On the 8th of November, Garibaldi formally resigned all his powers into the hands of Victor Emmanuel, and from that moment every insult was heaped upon him by the king's government. His personal enemies were placed in power, his policy reversed in almost every case, his grants denied, his appointments cancelled, his officers ignored, his wounded neglected, his heroes sneered at, and when he himself sent to the king's stables for a carriage to bear him to the place of embarkation he was told to take a cab.

On the 9th, Garibaldi, having borrowed twenty pounds to pay his debts, left Naples on board an American ship for the island of Caprera, without fifteen shillings in his pocket.

ASPROMONTE, 1861.

We hasten to conclude for the present our scanty outline of this great life, with a brief allusion to one of the saddest events in military history.

To explain the complicated interests at stake in the disaster at Aspromonte, and to prove the perfidy of the Italian ministry, would need a volume. All we hope to do is to show that, from a reasonable point of view, the expedition was not so mad and wayward a thing as it is generally believed to have been.

In the spring of 1861, Garibaldi passed through the north of Italy, calling upon the people to arm. Everywhere the enormous majority sided with him. What was his programme? Rome. The Ratazzi government was in; it was opposed to the movement. Yes, but not apparently so. Ratazzi favoured the enlistments more openly than he need have done. He had been to Paris; he had settled with the emperor that Naples might be a separate kingdom, the kingdom of some French prince. Italian unity might still be crushed, but Garibaldi must be crushed first. They would encourage him to advance; they would then declare his conduct contrary to the interests of the nation, and he should be opposed by the royal troops. Enlistments are thus suffered to go on. Garibaldi is suffered to land at Palermo, at Naples. An Italian frigate actually follows them within range. The captain has these ambiguous instructions, “Do what is best for the interests of the king.” There was a

wide-spread notion that there was a secret understanding between Garibaldi and the king. It was thought the king would not sanction, but that he would not prevent the expedition. Garibaldi firmly believed that he who had so graciously accepted the Two Sicilies would accept Rome on the same terms. An attack on the French in Rome was probably never contemplated. Had the Pope put himself under English protection, as he at one time intended to do, or had he in any way left Rome, which he would probably have done before Garibaldi came in sight of the walls, there would have been scarcely any pretext for the French army of occupation to remain. The Romans themselves did not want them, and had elected Garibaldi by an enormous majority of votes guardian of their freedom and commander-in-chief of their armies. The pope's tenure of Rome then and ever since has hung upon a thread; his temporal power virtually ceased when Victor Emmanuel was proclaimed King of Italy and the Piedmontese marched into the Papal territories and took possession of them. Thus Victor Emmanuel himself had pointed the direction, and initiated the action of the next scene in the revolutionary drama. Was it so strange that Garibaldi should follow in that track?

On the 29th of August, 1861, information was received that the royal troops who had been sent to arrest the march of the volunteers upon Rome were at Stefano, only two hours' march from Forestali di Aspromonte, where the Garibaldians were assembled. A meeting could no longer be avoided. Garibaldi's orders were not to form in line, not to fight. Afterwards he said to the Marchioness Pallavicini, "From my splendid position at Aspromonte I saw the Bersaglieri advancing for three quarters of an hour before they came up. Had I wished, I could have crushed them completely; but I gave orders not to fire, and none near me did fire. I openly declared before I left Turin that I would rather die than draw my sword upon an Italian soldier."

The royal troops advanced in silence; they gave no notice, they demanded no surrender. Garibaldi alone advanced to meet them, his large cloak of pale grey lined with red thrown over his broad shoulders. When within gun shot they took aim at him. He turned round and repeated the order "Don't fire." Then those men, advancing upon a foe whom honour had left defenceless, opened fire. "I saw a slight shiver of his body," writes one of his officers; "then we knew he was hit. Two balls had struck him almost at once, one in the thigh, another full in the instep. He took two or three steps and then began to stagger. We ran to him and held him up. He was regardless of his sufferings, and raising his cap, he cried, '*Viva Italia! Viva Italia!*' He then fell heavily back. I had his poor foot resting on my thigh; I felt a shivering in all his limbs. He wished to try and walk; but we carried him and laid him down under a tree. He cried to his assailants, 'Peace, peace, brethren;' and to us, 'Do not fight.'" When he felt that he could not move, he took out a cigar and began smoking. He was perfectly unruffled. Presently a doctor came and dressed his wounds. Then Colonel Pallavicini, the commander of the royal troops came to him. His head was uncovered. The first words he said were, "General, this is the most unhappy day of my life."

"You have only obeyed your orders," replied the general; "you have done your duty."

He was borne that day on a litter by some of his officers for many miles. His sufferings must have been very great, but not a murmur escaped him; he had a smile for every one, and appeared perfectly calm. They brought him to Varignano in the *Duke of Genoa*. The voyage was a most painful one, the surgeon vainly endeavouring to extract the bullet, and the general fainting after each attempt. When he landed at Varignano, the women flocked round him, kissing his hands and the long cloak which was wrapped about him. Every one was sobbing. Garibaldi was deeply affected, and said, "Patience, my children, hope for better times;" then, turning to others, with a very sweet smile, "You see Garibaldi is not dead yet." He then fainted away and was carried to the apartment prepared for him in the convict prison. The paper was hanging in ribbons from the damp walls. There was a small dirty mattress with hardly any clothes on it. They covered him up as well as they could with two greatcoats and the blanket in which he was borne. No lint or dressing of any kind had been provided for him. There were other convicts in the prison, but there was not one so badly wounded.

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H. R. HAWES.

ERRATUM.—Art. GARIBALDI.—No. X., p. 277, for *Rhine*, read *St. Elmo*.



MAKING A CLEAN BREAST OF IT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN BEQUEST."

I HAVE never joined in the common cant of abusing dinner-parties. Of course when the cookery is bad, the viands cold, the sherry Marsala, or the claret Gladstone, the thing is a swindle. You have put on your white tie, squeezed your feet into tight shiny boots, adorned your countenance with a conventional simper, wound yourself up to go from seven to ten, and so have a right to expect that the fuel to be supplied to the engine shall be of requisite quality. No man on the shady side of twenty-five can be expected to do otherwise than collapse, when the host turns out to be a teetotalter in disguise.

On the other hand, the objections which you hear urged against dinner-parties, on the ground of their general stiffness and formality, are, I think, deserving of contempt. To those who have eyes, there is always something worthy of being seen; to those who have ears, something worthy of being heard. The cavillers, you will find, are for the most part weak-minded, self-conscious people, who go oppressed by a sense of conversational liabilities which they feel that their intellectual assets are inadequate to meet. They know from experience that they will awake next morning with an oppressive sense of their own social shortcoming; afraid that the hostess must have thought them dreadfully stupid last night. Then what a painfully common-

place observation that was about the Emperor Louis Napoleon 'being "a Sphinx's riddle," made in a downright panic of sympathy for the hostess, in the pause which succeeded the removal of the fish. Then the horrors of an evil conscience are not unfrequently aggravated in such poor weak-minded creatures. It may even be a matter of speculation, which I leave divines and physiologists to settle, whether they are not altogether caused by the deplorable ignorance of physiological law which they have evinced during the banquet of the night before. What man can expect to take a cheerful view of his own conduct the day after he has mixed salmon and curried lobster with Devonshire cream!

My plan at a dinner-party is, in the first place, carefully to attend to my physical well-being; to talk a little to my partner if she be so disposed, otherwise to give myself no conversational trouble whatever, but placidly to devote myself to the enjoyment of my dinner, and to well-bred observation of the sayings and doings of those around me. Nature has, I think, made me an observer. I am never self-occupied in company, and my sympathies are mean enough to enable me to comprehend and enjoy the multitude. I am self-candid to an almost unequalled degree; for, quite as vain as a mere ordinary mortal, I am happily able to relish the absurd points of my own character quite as much as I enjoy the follies of my neighbours. When my vanity winces my humour almost always grins.

On returning from a dinner-party, my habit is to amuse myself with making notes of and reflections on what I have seen and heard. The latter not being, generally speaking, sufficiently deep to drown an average intellect, I am led to form a modest hope that what has amused the writer may help half an hour to pass pleasantly to some good-natured reader. Let me see then. I open my note-book at p. 1, year 18—, January 10th. I quote the following passage literally from the list:—"Dined with the B's. Took Miss Glycerine down to dinner. Made a humorous observation about crinoline on the way down stairs. Had often made the same before with success. A failure this time; received an icy smile in return, as much as to say that the subject was one which a young lady of really well-regulated mind, such as Miss Glycerine's, could not for an instant think of as proper for a gentleman to make jokes about to a lady. Felt instantly that conversation was hopeless; at most, that it would be jerky, and composed of scraps. Felt at the same time that a calm and dignified silence during dinner would be a demeanour not unbecoming to a man in my position, whose thoughts might reasonably and creditably be supposed to be far away in the great Trevia Turnpike case. Hoped that some one would introduce the case when the ladies left after dinner, so that I might have an opportunity of shining a little in a modest way, upon the law of turnpikes in general, and the Trevia in particular; for one or two great dispensers of briefs are of the company. Hoped that the plates would be hot, and the champagne well iced."

I find it upon record that my dear friends Mrs. Watson, Mrs. Lawrie, and Mrs. MacPherson, were considerably the most amusing and most noteworthy individuals present at this party at the B's. If you happen to have something to say to Mrs. Watson which you really wish her to hear, the plan which I

would advise you to follow is to address your observation to some one else, say to Mrs. MacPherson; for it is an idiosyncrasy of Mrs. Watson's that she is at all times more interested in discovering what ground you have in common with some one else than in hearing what it is that you have to say to herself. This feeling, so far as my observation goes, is, I should say, far from an uncommon one; but the innocence of Mrs. Watson's manifestation of it is original and charmingly comical. Vacancy is in her eye, for her ears are far away. Do not I see while that prosy old Colonel Robertson is innocently supposing that she is listening to his account of the heat in India, that her right ear is busily engaged in trying to catch a far-off conversation which will throw light upon certain questions which have greatly vexed her soul during the past week?—that is, whether the drawing-room in Mr. Johnston's new house is larger than her own or not, and what Mr. Johnston paid for his new house, and what is the ground rent. Having collected these data, Mrs. Watson will go over them leisurely while undressing to-night. She will then be in a position to come to a well-founded conclusion as to whether or not she has reasonable ground of jealousy against the Johnstons on the score of houses. It is indeed a great fact that Mr. Johnston is not so rich as Mr. Watson; still the Johnstons have been getting up wonderfully of late, and if they go on at this pace it is impossible to say what things may come to, and how Mrs. Watson may feel herself called on to adjust her sentiments. Mrs. Watson's left ear, meanwhile, is not to be outdone in diligence by her right. It is busily engaged in listening to an intellectual conversation going on between Mrs. Lawrie and Professor McCloud. Mrs. Lawrie knows that Mrs. Watson is listening, and she triumphs in the knowledge; for has not she just succeeded in getting the great Professor to talk in his most wonderful style? Her soul is a-glow while he unfolds his speculations upon the *absolute* and the *unconditioned*. Qy.—Is Mrs. Lawrie's delight purely that of a gratified philosophic spirit? The fact that she does not comprehend one single word of the harangue must militate against the belief that it is. For an explanation, therefore, of her delight, which is genuine enough, we must look to other and more mundane causes. I suspect Mrs. Watson has something to do with it. The case, I feel certain, stands thus: Mrs. Lawrie is newly married, and a relative of Mrs. Watson's. Mr. Lawrie, author of *From Mollusc to Man*, is a young man of parts, but with his way to make. Mr. Watson, on the other hand, is, as we know, wealthy, lives in a large house, with plate glass windows, tiled entrance hall, hot water pipes, and fashionable situation, and accordingly he is accustomed to hear from society that "of course it knows expense is nothing to him." On Mrs. Lawrie's marriage, therefore, to a man of whom society would, on the other hand, observe that "goodness knew how he would ever make ends meet," Mrs. Watson naturally felt that, according to all law and precedent as hitherto known to herself, she was entitled to patronise Mrs. Lawrie, and did so accordingly. Yes, fancy her—Mrs. Watson—a mere creature of tables and sofa covers, whose soul, to quote from Mrs. Lawrie, "never rose an inch above the dull earth on which she trod," presuming, in all the pomp and plenitude of her worldliness and stupidity, to patronise a Mrs. Lawrie—a philosopher—a *Comtist*—a Higher Human Intelligence! To-

night victory has declared itself for the Superior Being. The *absolute* and the *unconditioned* have proved themselves very needle-guns, and have won the day. The foe looks scared and terror-stricken. Henceforth let us hope that Mrs. Watson will both know and feel that to a Mrs. Lawrie Mammon is nought, and that the *Human Intellect* is the deity to whom she bows the knee.

Turn we now to Mrs. MacPherson. Mrs. MacPherson is not pretty, is not especially clever, cannot therefore be said to have a large share of things terrestrial. What share things terrestrial may have of her is another question. I have sound reasons for believing that she is by no means at one with Providence as to her deserts in life: consequently we may be almost justified in drawing the inference that she is not wholly without desire to ascertain the minutæ of the arrangements between Providence and her neighbours.

Dominant in her, however, is that subtle something, whatever it be, which gives that *sine quâ non* of ladylike or gentlemanly manner—composure. Possibly not devoid of curiosity about the Johnstons' new house, Mrs. MacPherson would sooner die at the stake—sooner almost have a brother in the greengrocery line, which would be to her a species of slow incrementation—than allow eye or ear to fidget for a single instant after the fashion of Mrs. Watson. Whatever faith she may have in wealth, birth, or talent, the first article of Mrs. MacPherson's creed is faith in herself as a lady. You may show her that she is not high born, that she is not clever; you may reduce her to poverty and heap many misfortunes on her head, and you will still find her the same Mrs. MacPherson. But contrive to make her believe, however erroneously, that her deportment in public is not ladylike, and she would instantly collapse; just as Mrs. Watson would do were she to lose her money—as Mrs. Lawrie would do were the truth ever unhappily to be forced into her that she is not a Higher Human Intelligence.

In these days we hear much speculation as to what ought to be the concrete object of a man's worship. For my part I think he has not far to seek. I recommend him to worship neither father nor mother, nor silver nor gold, nor yet woman. Let him worship himself; and that he may do this heartfully and efficiently, my advice to him is carefully to cultivate a reasonable amount of self-ignorance.

Who was the shallow thinking blockhead who first gave tongue to the popular fallacy as to the value of self-knowledge? Infinitely wiser was the Scotchman, whose daily prayer was for a good conceit of himself. Thrice happy is the man, the dimness of whose intellectual vision has never inflicted on his self-love the mortification of feeling that he has on any occasion been prosy, obstinate, or illogical; that others were most justly entitled to laugh at him, and that most assuredly they are not likely to neglect to avail themselves of their privilege.

If it has ever occurred to you, having regard to the sublime self-ignorance of *every man and woman with whom you are acquainted*, to speculate curiously as to the possibility of that "I," that veritable *Ego*, which has for so many years been the object of its own veneration and tender solicitude, being worthy, on a general estimate of its attributes, of having that epithet applied

to it which it has, in its day, so liberally applied to others, and being in fact "an ass,"—if such, I say, has been your unwholesome habit, let me entreat you to give it up. Cease for an instant to speculate upon the possibility of your being, all unknown to yourself, as prosy as Tomkins, as ill-bred as Jones, as illogical as White, as irritable as Black. This kind of thing will never do in this world. It may be well for a man that he should have sufficient clearness of intellect to have a reasonable perception of his own moral blunders, provided his general self-esteem be robust enough not to be seriously impaired by the sight. But it behoves us to be careful. Doses of self-knowledge must be taken as cautiously as drops of morphia; an overdose may poison. Don't we all know how many men, making money and reputation, living happily on the best terms with themselves, to whom a few extra grains of self-knowledge would infallibly prove fatal, and reduce to incompetence? To have ability and to know the fact may be an excellent and very effective thing, but to have profound self-reliance without any ground whatever, is often even more effective.

Infinitely subtle is the essence of this profound self-faith which one sees and envies in some men. How charming must it be to feel convinced that all one says and does is said and done as well as, nay better than, any one else can say or do it! The moral power which enables a man to bully the world is not unfrequently bestowed by impartial nature as compensation for her frugality in other mental gifts; and a noble compensation it is. No effort of the will can generate the quality—or would not I have had it long ago?—nature alone can give it.

Visiting 'Change last winter in the town of Sillerton, in company of my friend Smart, who is a habitué of 'Change there, I felt my arm suddenly touched by my companion, who then asked me in a more reverential and awe-struck tone than I ever heard from him in church—"if I saw that man there—that man with the black frock coat, dark-grey trousers, and gold-headed cane." I replied that I noted the individual in question. "That," my friend then continued, in an awful whisper, as though an archangel were in the room—"that is Joseph Brown. He is the richest man in Sillerton. Nobody *knows* what he is worth. I met him at dinner—sat next him in fact—one day last week." I gazed reverentially upon the great man, to the gratification of my friend.

Now, where a man has that which he knows to be the object of veneration to those around him, that he should possess the composure of genuine self-satisfaction is very intelligible. I should have been infinitely surprised had I found the great Joseph Brown weak in style or fussy in manner. He knows and feels that he is, as it were, a sun—the centre of a great system—diffusing light and heat to the many planets which revolve round him; these in their turn shedding a modified splendour upon the minor satellites which revolve round them.

No wonder, therefore, if Dives is calm and confident. But the puzzling phenomenon occurs when you see a man perfectly self-reliant upon literally nothing at all; when you see him not only attempting with perfect belief in his own power a work which another of ten times his special ability is too modest

to try, but, in spite of ludicrous failure, persuading himself and nine-tenths of the world that he has done it admirably, and so reaping the substantial rewards of success. Instead of those men being "fools" who "rush in where angels fear to tread," I suspect they are really the wise ones of their species. They have fathomed the almost fathomless depth of the gullibility of mankind. Here is the secret of their faith, which after all rests on truth. They have a real living belief in the fact—and a mighty fact it is to work upon—that on points which do not visibly and directly affect their worldly interests, the multitude neither has any opinion nor the capacity to form one; but it will give its gold and its applause to him who can speak longest, loudest, and most confidently. Then the voice of the multitude gives such material weight to him who gets it in his favour, that even those who see through the imposition are obliged to feign belief—to read his books, buy his wine or his pills, under the pains and penalties of being held unconventional—severely to be punished as enacting treason against the solidarity of humanity.

You are thoroughly persuaded, most likely, that you are a very fair public speaker indeed. Cultivate this faith by all means. Do not trouble yourself with studying the laws of eloquence, as it is just possible that a fuller knowledge of them might unhinge you a little. So long as you are true to your faith, it will enable you after dinner to propose the health of the ladies or of the chairman in a way which will do you credit. No one will pause to reflect as to whether or not you are talking nonsense. A dim suspicion that you are, may perhaps be floating in the minds of a few sceptics. But so long as you don't think so yourself, you are quite safe. The most intrinsically excellent joke, if timidly uttered, will raise but a forced smile, while the worst—how bad that may be, heaven only knows—if it only flow forth merrily, doubting not of a good reception, will be welcomed with applause. The secret of eloquence is to have an audience that believes in you.

To my brother then would I say, "Know thyself wisely, but not too well;" that is if it is your ambition to *do* much, and the present generation has been led by its teachers to look with favour only on the man who *does*. Attend then to my maxims, you man, who wish to *do*—and howsoever great a blockhead you may be, fear not—with self-reliance you are safe. In fact, the self-sufficient blockhead, as regards practical effectiveness, has many advantages over the self-reliant clever man. Every one makes room for audacious stupidity. Cover it with ridicule, what does it care? It never feels it, never sees it. You make way in a crowd for a chimney-sweep or a coal-heaver, should he insist on taking the wall of you. If you come into collision, you are both aware that he will blacken you, while at the point of contact you will relieve him of a little grime.



HIS YOUNG LORDSHIP.

A STORY FOR GREAT AND LITTLE PEOPLE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN."

IT was a pat of butter—only a pat of butter, a small, silly thing, and yet it made me feel as the children say, "like to greet." For I knew the spot it came from,—a lovely nook in a lovely land. I could picture the narrow valley, so rich and green, over which the huge grey granite mountains watched, frowning or smiling, but still watching, like faithful parents over their children; reflecting the sunshine, gathering the rain, and sending both down alternately upon the fertile tract below. I could summon up its "pastures green," not like English meadows, hedged and ditched, but divided angularly by stone dykes, among which grew innumerable ferns and accidental clumps of heather and whin; while here and there in damp places were queer bog-plants; butter-wort with its flat leaves and tall-stemmed blue flowers; the white tufts of the cotton-plant; the aromatic bog-myrtle. Nay, as I looked at my pat of butter, I could almost see the cows that originated it,—small, shaggy, active, Highland beasts, or the dainty little Ayrshire breed, the prettiest of cattle, moving about their restricted plot of pasturage under the shadow of these same mountains which—whom, I was nearly writing, they felt so like living friends—any one who knows, loves; and once loving, loves for ever.

"Yes," said my hostess, whom I had better call by the good Scotch name of Mrs. Burns, "it is real Scotch butter; we don't get anything here like it. It was sent to me from —," naming the place, to which I mean to give an imaginary name, and call it the Laignlands.

For upon it, and the butter, hangs a story, which she immediately began to tell me: a story true and simple as that of Jeanie Deans—of which, while she related it, we were both strongly reminded. I asked her leave to tell it here, just plainly as it was, with no elaborations or exaggerations,—for indeed it required none; only disguising the names and the places, so that while the truth remained—the internal truth, which is the real life and usefulness of fiction—the bare outside facts may be quite unrecognisable by the general public. And I wish I could give to the written tale anything like the simple graphic power with which it was unconsciously told.

"Yes," said Mrs. Burns, looking me through with her clear kind eyes; "I must tell you all about that butter, and how we got it from such a distance. You know the Laignlands? Isn't it a bonnie place? Such a sweet, quiet, out-of-the way farm. We lived there a whole summer. We had come to the neighbourhood, and did not know where to get lodgings; the whole country-side was full; and they took us in at the Laignlands, eight in all,—papa, and me, and our six: and we lived there for ten happy weeks. That was nine years ago."

It was not nearly so long since I had seen the farm myself; and though I was only there, at that particular farm-house, for one day, I could still remember it; the garden, wonderfully neat and well-stocked for that part of Scotland, where the lazy Highland nature has not yet arrived at the difficult science of horticulture: and among the common people life implies mere living, without any attempt to adorn life, with even the beauty of a cottage flower-border, or the small luxury of a dozen gooseberry bushes, and a row of beans or peas. Therefore, I could especially recall this farm-house, for it had a capital garden, and an upland orchard behind; and its orderliness was equal to its picturesqueness, which is a great deal to say for dwellings of its size and character in the Highlands of Scotland.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Burns (I will go straight on with her part in the conversation and omit my own, which indeed consisted merely of a few questions), "we lived there ten weeks, and during that time we got to have quite an affection for our landlord and his wife. They were such simple people, and so honest, so painfully honest. Of course, in country lodgings where the people can only make hay while the sun shines, and that is for about two months in the twelve, one almost expects to be cheated, or at least made the most of in some way; but these good folk only cheated themselves. For instance, we had the run of the garden, and you can imagine what a raid my six children would make upon the gooseberry bushes. Besides, we had an unlimited quantity of vegetables. But when, at the first week's end, I looked to see what was put down in the bill, there was nothing at all! 'Oh,' said the mistress, a tall, handsome Highland woman, much younger than her husband, and speaking English with a quaint slow purity of accent that you often find among those who have to learn it like a foreign language—'Oh, I hope ye'll use your freedom with the garden—we'd never ask ye to pay.' But when I remonstrated—for I don't like that Celtic fashion of being too proud to receive honest payment, and yet expecting always an equivalent in kind—Mrs. Kennedy (I will call her Kennedy) quickly assented, with a sort of dignified acquiescence that had a touch of condescension in it, begging I would put my own price on the things we took, for she really did not know what they were worth, which doubtless was the truth, for you are aware how little actual coin is current in that district, and how people there often live half a lifetime without ever having seen a town street, or the inside of a moderate-sized shop.

"This woman, Mrs. Kennedy, was a case in point. She was about forty, her husband being somewhat over sixty; yet neither of them had ever travelled twenty miles from their own farm, which had been rented by Kennedy, and his father before him, for the best part of a century, from the one great landholder of these parts.

"And his lordship kens us weel," said the gudewife to me one day, when my children had been describing a grand-looking gentleman whom they met riding over the hill-side. 'He's a fine man, and a gude friend to us. Many's the day I hae seen him stand and crack wi' the auld gudeman—that's Kennedy's father; and he never meets Kennedy himsel', but he'll stop and shake hands and ask for the wife and bairns. He's a fine man,—his lordship

—and a gude landlord; he kens a' that's done on the property. Though I'll no say but that he might hae waur tenants than oursels: for my man and his father before him hae lived at the Laighlands, and paid their honest rent, every term-day, for seventy-five years.'

"I remember this little incident," continued Mrs. Burns, "because I remember the woman's face as she spoke—full of that honourable pride which is as justifiable in a farmer as in a duke; and, also, because circumstances brought it to my mind afterwards.

"Well, we stayed at the Laighlands all summer. It was a glorious summer to my young folks—and a sorrowful day when we left the place. We had to start about four in the morning, in Kennedy's cart, which had been our sole link with the civilised world, and in which he had conveyed to us daily—for this absolutely refusing payment to the last—all provisions which the farm could not supply; and the few extraneous necessities—letters, newspapers, linendrapery, &c., which we indulged in at this primitive place. He brought them from the nearest town, or what flattered itself was a town, several miles off. We had given him a deal of trouble, and now he had taken for us the final trouble of all, by bestowing endless pains on the arrangement of seats and mattresses, so as to make the rough jolting cart a little comfortable for me and the children. They cried as they said good-bye to the pretty place where they had been so happy, and the good folk who had been so excessively kind to them. And I own I was half inclined to cry too, when Mrs. Kennedy, who had been rather invisible of late—she brought her gudeman his seventh child while we were at the Laighlands—appeared, weak and white-looking as she was, in the cold dawn of the morning, and gave me a basket neatly packed with all sorts of good things—eatables and drinkables. 'It's for the weans on their journey,' she said. 'We'll no forget the weans.'

"And it was a very long time before the weans forgot her or the Laighlands. Of winter nights they used to go over every bit of our blithe time there—from the first day we came and settled ourselves in the small but tidy parlour, in the clean bedrooms, full of furniture that looked as if it had been bought in the last century—as possibly it had—up to the final day when old Kennedy, he was quite an old man, though hale and hearty, drove his cart into the sea almost—for the waves were running high—and carried the children through them into the boat by which we had to reach the steamer that was to bear us far away—to horrid London, to streets, and squares, and work, and school. And over and over again I had to describe to the little ones, whose memories were fainter than they cared to confess, the figure of the good old man in his grey kilt, bonnet, and plaid, with his white hair flying in the wind, as he stood making his last signals from the shore, and shouting out his last Gaelic farewells, for he could speak but little English; the boys answering him in the few words he had taught them, which they remembered ever so long, till Gaelic was rubbed out by Latin and Greek. I too—with the warm heart that a mother cannot help having towards any one who has been kind to her children—kept for a long time in my store-cupboard the basket Mrs. Kennedy had filled for the bairns on their voyage. And every New Year, for several years, we sent books and other gifts to the little Kennedys,

hoping every summer that we should manage to go back to the Laighlands. But we never did; and in process of time our connection with the place slipped by—perhaps our interest likewise: in this busy London life it is so easy to forget.

“It was last New Year, or possibly a few days after then, that I was sitting just here—in this drawing room”—(which was a very nice one, for Mrs. Burns’ husband has honourably worked his way to a handsome house in one of the best streets in London)—“I was sewing by myself, and the young folks were down below in the school-room. It was one of those terribly cold bleak days that we had last winter, the wind howling in the chimney, and the snow falling or trying to fall, for it was too cold almost to snow. I was sitting with my feet on the fender, and with the feeling of intense thankfulness which I always have in such weather, that I have a good house over my head and all my dear ones about me,—when a message came that some one below wanted to speak to me.

“‘Who is it?’ asked I; for such messages are endless in our house, and generally prove to be applications for charity. It was a poor woman, my servant said; a woman with a little girl, and she would not send up her name, but insisted upon speaking to me.

“I thought it was one of the ordinary genteel London beggars, and you know what London begging is, and how, after being taken in over and over again, one has to harden one’s heart”—(a process which, judging from Mrs. Burns’ face, in her case would not be sudden or easy). “Of course, I could not refuse to see the person; but I went down to her, looking, I dare say, as hard as a stone.

“She was a tall thin woman, remarkably tall for a woman; and her long straight black dress, and clinging black shawl, no thicker than yours to-day, though it was mid-winter, made her seem taller and thinner still. I looked in her face, which was sharp-featured, worn, and elderly, but I could not remember ever having seen it before. So I just asked her her business, very coldly I suppose, for she drew back at once towards the dining-room door.

“‘Ye’ll no mind me. I’m troubling ye; so I’ll just be gone, ma’am It’s no matter.’

“It was a Scotch voice, and a Scotch manner; the air of quiet independence that, I am glad to say, even the very poorest of us seldom quite lose. We Scotch don’t beg like your London beggars. So, of course, I asked her to wait a minute, and tell me her name.

“‘Do you no ken?—Eh, Mrs. Burns? I must be sair changed—and nae wonder—if ye dinna ken me. I’m Mistress Kennedy of the Laighlands.’

“‘Mrs. Kennedy of the Laighlands!’ You will guess how in an instant the face of matters was entirely changed, and what sort of a welcome she got—she and her daughter, for the little girlie that hung by her gown, and peered from behind her with shy, dark Gaelic eyes, must be hers—possibly the baby that was born while we were there.

“Ay, so she was. ‘She’s the youngest; and I couldna leave her behind; though it’s a very sad journey I come on to this awfu’ London. Oh, it is an awfu’ place, Mrs. Burns! And ye’re keeping weel yoursel’, and the gudeman

and a' the bairns?" added she, with the instinctive tact and courtesy which one sees almost universally among Highland people, and which we had always noticed so much in Mrs. Kennedy. Though a farmer's wife, her manners were as good as many a lady born. But she looked so ill, so depressed, so actually weighed down with care, that I shrank from asking her the especial trouble which had brought her hither. By-and-by she poured it out.

"No, the gudeman's no deid, Mrs. Burns, though sometimes he almos wishes he were. He has got notice to quit the Laighlands. Just think!—the Laighlands! Where he was born, and his father likewise—and where he has paid his rent—never behind a day—for fifty year. Isn't it hard ma'am?"

"It was hard. We folk who live in streets and houses all just like one another can scarcely recognise how hard. Besides, as Mrs. Kennedy went on to explain, and which I myself knew well, in that thinly-populated district an eviction meant actual turning out; with small prospect of finding another home. The farms were few and far between, mostly held by tenants who had held them for generations. A notice to quit meant not merely a flitting but a complete uprooting. No wonder the poor body spoke of it as we speak of some heavy calamity.

"But your factor is a good man," said I. "Did you not appeal to him?"

"Mrs. Kennedy shook her head. 'I'm no saying aught against the factor, but he's my lord's servant, and they say my lord wants money, and they're wishing to feu the estate. But they might hae let my man keep the Laighlands a bit while. It'll no be lang—he's ower seventy year. It's breaking his heart.'

"I asked her why she did not write to the young lord; for the old lord, as he was now called, though scarcely past middle age when he died, had, I knew, been dead a year or more.

"We did think o' that. His young lordship—do you ken him, Mrs. Burns?"

"That was not likely; but I had heard about him—a promising lad in his teens, left sole master of one of the finest properties in Scotland. He was too young for people to know much good about him—but nobody knew any harm: he was a college youth, frank and lively, given to all the amusements of his age and rank—not much of a student, but that could hardly be expected of the heir to indefinite thousands a year. Still, as I told Mrs. Kennedy, a young man scarcely twenty, in any rank of life, was apt to be thoughtless, and in his rank great people often do little people a deal of harm without in the least intending it.

"That was just what the lawyer said—the lawyer I went to in Edinburgh, yesterday."

"Yesterday!" I exclaimed.

"Ay, ma'am, though it seems a year sinsyne. The gudeman couldna stir, being laid aside with rheumatism, so I just thought I would go up to Edinburgh mysel', and see Mr. Campbell, a friend o' mine that's a writer there. And he said to me—"Mrs. Kennedy, if I was you I would gang up to London and speak wi' his young lordship face to face." That was yester-

day, as I said; there wasna a day to lose—in a week's time the notice we got to leave the Laighlands was due; and we would be turned out. So I wrote to my husband frae Mr. Campbell's office, I put mysel' in the train—me and the bairn, for I could neither send her hame nor leave her in Edinburgh; and we travelled a' the night and reached London the morn, just as we were.'

"Just as they were!—in those thin clothes, and such a terrible cold night as it had been! No wonder they looked as they did, and that my servant had made such a mistake about them and their condition in life. Very much surprised the maid looked when I rang the bell and desired her to take the little girl and make her comfortable in my children's nursery; and bring up breakfast at once for 'my friend Mrs. Kennedy, who had come all the way from Scotland last night.'

"Mrs. Kennedy said nothing, nor resisted in the least; she was utterly exhausted. She sat by the fire with her hands on her lap, and her sad eyes looking straight before her, scarcely noticing the things around her, as if she had been familiar with them all her life. And when at last she got a little strengthened by warmth and food, and was able to tell me her story, she did so with a composure and quiet dignity that would have surprised any one who did not know how the Jeanie Deans' nature, fearless, self-reliant, yet absolutely without self-consciousness, is not exceptional, but lies dormant in many and many a Scotchwoman, ready to appear at once when circumstances require it, as in this case. For you and I, I suppose, can hardly realize what such a sudden journey to London must have appeared to Mrs. Kennedy—almost like a journey to the Antipodes.

"'Were you not afraid?' I asked her.

"'Maybe,' she answered, faintly smiling. 'But somebody maun do it, ye ken, and there was naebody but me.' In that simple sentence the woman expressed all.

"'Poor body! only imagine her, dropped in the gloomy winter morning at the terminus in Euston Square, not knowing a soul, having but one place to go to in all London, and with her Scotch directness of purpose she went right to it—his young lordship's town house, the magnificent mansion in — Square.

"It was partially closed, as most great houses are in the Christmas recess. Mrs. Kennedy merely thought, 'the London folk are awfu' late of rising,' and unwilling to disturb the family, sat down on the lowest stone step, with her little girl beside her. There she waited, pinched with cold—but she was well accustomed to cold—until there should be some sign of life in the house within. By-and-by came 'a braw sogerly young man, wi' a bag o' letters,' and rang as if he, at least, had no fear of disturbing his lordship's slumbers, but he poked his letters in at a slit in the door—and still it was not opened. At last Mrs. Kennedy took courage, and rang the bell likewise, and begged the footman who opened it to tell his lordship that she had come all the way from Scotland to speak to him, and could he see her for five minutes on private business, as soon as he rose?

"But the footman only laughed, and called another footman who laughed too, and they told her it was a capital story, but that if she didn't go away

they would send the Mendicity officers after her. 'I didna ken what the young man meant,' added Mrs. Kennedy, 'but I tellt him (ceevilly enough, for I was sure he was only doing his duty) that his young lordship would mind me weel, I was Mistress Kennedy o' the Laighlands. But what do you think Mrs. Burns?' and she looked at me with a grieved simplicity, 'he had never heard tell o' the Laighlands!'

"There must have been some uncomfortable passages between her and these grand footmen, though with her natural dignified reticence, which did not like even to own that she had been insulted, Mrs. Kennedy avoided particularizing them. Besides, the feudal reverence in which the young lord was held everywhere on the estate was such, that under the shadow of it even his domestics were exempt from blame. I could only gather that she was turning to quit the house, when up there came a young man, or, as Mrs. Kennedy pointedly put it, a young gentleman.

"He entered with an air of authority, so that she might have taken him for her landlord, only it had been plainly said that the young nobleman was absent from home; 'and,' reasoned she in her simplicity, 'his lordship must be far too great a gentleman to bid his servants tell a lee about himself.' But the new-comer was of some importance in the establishment. When he perceived the confusion in the hall, he asked imperatively what it was all about; and so he learnt Mrs. Kennedy's name, and where she came from.

"He was a Scotsman—I'm gey sure he was a Scotsman,' she said; but at any rate he was a kindly-hearted young gentleman, and evidently held some good position in the establishment; for when he spoke and listened to her answers, the servants ceased interfering, and hung back respectfully. At length he asked her to walk into his 'study,' a little room leading off the hall, and then told her who he was.

(Mrs. Burns gave me the gentleman's name and position in the young lord's household; but neither are of consequence to my story. If he ever reads it, he may take the reward of one of those small kindlinesses which cost so little and are worth so much, and recognise himself.)

"He placed the weary woman in his own arm-chair, and shut the study-door. Then, before he allowed her to speak another word, he opened a cupboard, and took out a bottle of wine and a bag of biscuits, with which he put a little life into her and the child,—the good bairn, her mother's own daughter, who had stood silent and sleepy and hungry, but had never once shed a tear. Then he bade Mrs. Kennedy tell him her whole case from beginning to end.

"It was very simple; and he, of course, must have seen it clearly enough,—probably much clearer than the poor woman herself saw it. It was the common story of the different way in which the same things affect big folk and little. Probably nobody was to blame; or the whole was a matter of mere carelessness. In all likelihood the young nobleman knew nothing whatever about it, and never would, unless some one specially told him. 'You cannot see him,' said Mr. —, 'he really is not here, but you might write to him. If you like I will sketch out the letter.'

"But," continued Mrs. Kennedy, 'I tellt him that I was ill at the pen,

and gin I wrote maybe his lordship couldna read it; and if I could only see him, just for five minutes. I hae seen him mony a time—riding up our hill-side by his father's big horse—on his wee Shetland pony. O, gin I could but see his lordship!

"Probably the young gentleman thought—as I did then—oh, if his lordship could but see this woman!—one of the sort of women who bore the sons that followed and fought for his forefathers; with her strong, earnest, and yet not unbeautiful Highland face; her complete self-forgetfulness, and absorption in the work she had before her. So, after a little consideration, he agreed with her that a personal interview would give the best chance. But it could only be attained by her going to the college where the young lord then was; and which, to avoid all recognition, I will call St. Cuthbert's Hall, Oxbridge. Would she do this? Could she do it? For it was a considerable journey from London, and it would cost a good deal more money. She asked how much; and then inwardly reckoned her purse. It fell short by at least twenty shillings.

"This was a hard discovery, but she kept it to herself. She had never borrowed a halfpenny in her life, and would not begin now,—certainly not from a stranger. The only thought that occurred to her was to sell something, perhaps a little cairngorm brooch she had; but how to set about it she did not know. And then, in answer to the young gentleman's question, had she any friends in London? she suddenly thought of us.

"She did not know, or if she ever did know, had forgotten, our London address, and our name was a common one enough. The Directory, which her friend took down and diligently searched in, scarcely helped her at all; till at length she recollected my husband's profession and somewhat peculiar Christian name. 'That's him,' she cried; and found to her comfort that Mr. — knew him, at least by reputation. Most young Scotsmen in London knew my husband. So, without more ado, Mrs. Kennedy took a grateful leave of the gentleman, put herself into a cab by his advice, and drove to our door.

"While she rested, for she absolutely refused to go to bed or to sleep, I went in to consult with my husband. But when I saw him I was so excited by the story I had heard, by the old remembrances which the sight of Mrs. Kennedy had revived, and by things in general, that I could not speak a word, but fairly began to 'greet.' He, too, was in no small degree affected by what at last I managed to tell him; even so much that he had to take refuge in the study of *Bradshaw*, and discovery of the Oxbridge trains.

"We found the only available one now would take Mrs. Kennedy into the town about eleven that night—an impossible time to see a young undergraduate. So we persuaded her with great difficulty, for it seemed to be like losing time, that her best course was to sleep at our house, she and Jessie, and take the earliest morning train, which was at six a.m. To this she consented; seeing, with her clear good sense, that nothing better could be done, and being withal greatly comforted by perceiving how happy Jessie was with our children.

"The children—or rather the young people—were in great excitement all

day. It was such a romantic story—in a small way—and Mrs. Kennedy was such a remarkable person, and Jessie (who being left behind in awful London, was at first very unhappy, and then being taken to the Zoological Gardens, found consolation in a ride on the big elephant), was such a quaint sort of child, speaking little English, yet full of a curious Highland grace and Highland intelligence. Late at night Jessie's mother came back, and then we all thronged round her, eager to learn how she had fared; in fact, greedy over every word of her story.

"It was told in her face. Never was there such a sad face. I wish his young lordship could have seen it.

"Understand, I don't mean unwarrantably to blame the young nobleman. He was but a boy—careless as boys are: and upon him had fallen, much before his time, the solemn responsibilities of property. I do not suppose he meant any harm, or had the least idea he was doing an unkindness. Only, he did it.

"When Mrs. Kennedy reached Oxbridge at about nine in the morning, she was told that his lordship could not be seen; in fact, he had not long gone to bed. This his valet informed her confidentially; adding, for he seemed a kind young fellow, and knew his lordship's Scotch property, and even thought he remembered the farm at the Laighlands, that as soon as his master waked he would tell him that there was a woman waiting, who had come all the way from Scotland to see him.

"She did wait—hour after hour—wandering forlornly about the college gardens and quadrangle—then going into the town for a little food—then walking hurriedly back again, lest by chance she should miss the happy moment when his young lordship should condescend to open his eyes; afraid to intrude, and yet trembling to be forgotten and overlooked, until nearly three in the afternoon. Then, in despair applying again to the valet, she heard that his lordship was at breakfast; some friends were breakfasting with him; he could not possibly be disturbed.

"Nevertheless, the kindly valet took in a message, imploring that she might see him just for one minute; she would not trouble his lordship longer. He surely must remember the Laighlands; he had ridden there many a time on his little pony. He sent out word that he did remember the Laighlands, and that though he could not see her now, he would see her on Monday following, at his house in London.

"But Mrs. Kennedy knew that Monday would be too late. If she could not leave London on the Saturday evening, she would not reach home in time to prevent the notice from taking effect, and the ejection being accomplished. She urged this upon the valet, who was really kind to her, and he was daring enough to go in and speak to his master a second time. Then one of the guests—a merry-looking young gentleman; they seemed a merry set, Mrs. Kennedy thought, for she heard their shouts of laughter through the door—came out and spoke to her, quite civilly, but with exceeding entertainment at the idea of her thinking it was possible she could see his lordship. But, nevertheless, he told her to make her mind easy, for that a telegram should be sent to the factor, to pause in the ejection until he heard further.

"With this Mrs. Kennedy was forced to be content; but she left Oxbridge with a very heavy heart.

"She stayed with us until the appointed Monday; and we took her about and showed her and Jessie the wonders of London, and diverted her mind as well as we could from the painful suspense under which she was labouring. She tried to enjoy herself—she was touchingly grateful. But still the heavy sense of what was hanging over her—hanging upon half-a-dozen words from a youth's careless lips—seemed to cloud over everything. I never spent a more restless uncomfortable Sunday than the one before that Monday, in thinking and wondering what would be the result of her application: a result of such slight moment to the young nobleman—of incalculable importance to the old farmer and his family.

"'I hope I'm no wicked, Mrs. Burns,' said the poor woman, looking at me pathetically on coming home from church,—we had taken her to hear our own dear minister, though he was Free Kirk and she Established, to prove that there were good 'soun' Presbyterian Kirks to go to even in London—'I didna mean to be wicked or unthankfu'—and I likit the look o' him, and his sweet voice and kind eyes—but I didna hear one half o' the minister's sermon.'

"Neither did I, so I could say nothing. It was no use to begin moralizing to Mrs. Kennedy about the relations between class and class, and the respective duties that each owes to the other. It is just what I notice in my own household, that what seems a very small thing to me may be a very great one to my servant; and that it behoves all who are put in authority to take the utmost pains to look at every question from the under as well as the upper side.

"Eleven in the forenoon was the hour fixed for the interview. We dressed Mrs. Kennedy for it with great care, and helped her out with some few things; for she had hardly any clothes with her; and we thought it advisable that his lordship's tenant of fifty years' standing, and representing a tenantry of fifty years previous to that, should appear before him as respectable as possible. To this end, it being a fearfully wet morning, we sent her off in a decent cab, which my husband gave orders should wait for her at the corner of the square.

"This done—we, too, waited; in a suspense that to my young people was very exciting, and to me actually painful. We had given her a full hour, indeed I expected a much longer absence, for I thought she would likely be kept waiting; people whose time is of little value never reckon the value of time to others. So if she were back by one, I should have been well-pleased. But long before the clock struck twelve the cab drew up to the door, and Mrs. Kennedy stood in the hall. The moment I saw her face I was certain all was lost.

"'Come in,' I said, and drew her into the study, and shut the door, to keep the children out awhile. 'Come in and sit down.'

"She sat down, and then lifted up to me the forlornest face! 'Ye're vera kind, ma'am; I'll tell the gudeman ye've been wonderfu' kind. My puir auld man!—and he past seventy year!—It's awfu' hard for him.'

"I took her hand—poor soul! and then she shed one or two tears, not more, and rose.

"I maun gang hame as soon as I can, Mrs. Burns, to look after the auld man."

"Then there is no chance? What did his lordship say to you?"

"Naething. He went aff to Paris yestreen."

"And did he leave no letter—no message?"

"Ne'er a word. He's clean forgot me. Young folks hae short memories. Maybe he meant nae harm."

"This was all she said. Not a word of blame or reproach, or bitterness. The instinctive feeling of feudal respect in which she had been brought up, or perhaps a higher feeling still, sealed her tongue even then. Nor did I—indignant as I was—desire to be more severe upon the young man than he deserved. I only wished that he, who had such an infinite power of good in his hands—such an unlimited possibility of experiencing the keenest joy of life—making people happy—could have seen the misery on this poor woman's face, as she thought of all her weary journeys thrown away—of her returning journey to tell the bitter tidings to her old husband, about whom she seemed to grieve far more than for herself.

"If his lordship wad hae let us stop at the Laighlands while the auld man lived," she said, "we wad hae paid a better rent—we tell't the factor that—and new stockit the farm, and Kennedy wad hae done his best wi' the new-fangled ways, though he hates them a'—and it wadna hae been for more than ten years at most: and what's ten years to his young lordship, that will scarce be a man when my auld man's in his grave? Ochone—ochone!" And she began rocking herself with a low moan, and talking in Gaelic to Jessie, who had run in eagerly with several of my children. I took them all away, and left the child and mother together.

"There was no more to be done. To apply to Mr. — who had been so kind, was also useless; he had told her he was only in London for two days. Besides, he could not interfere openly in her affairs, which, from his position in the household, he had nothing whatever to do. The only thing was to accept passively things as they were, and trust to the chance that the telegram sent had stopped present proceedings at the Laighlands. While in the meantime Mrs. Kennedy might take the course which had at first been intended, of addressing his lordship by letter.

"We wrote it for her, putting the case in her name, but in as strong terms as we could; and my husband took care that it should be forwarded in such a mode as that it was almost impossible his lordship should *not* receive it. This done, we sent the poor woman away by the night-train to Scotland—for she was most eager to be gone—making her and Jessie as comfortable as we could; earnestly hoping, and with perhaps an allowable hypocrisy trying hard to persuade her, that after all things might turn out less sad than she feared. We assured her—and ourselves in doing so—that the telegram would make all safe for a few days to come; and in the meantime her letter—that momentous letter, the invention and inditing of which had cost us, as well as herself, such a world of pains—might, nay, must, not only appeal to the young landlord's sense of justice, but touch his heart, even in the midst of

his Paris enjoyments; so that he would immediately send back word, confirming the Laighlands Farm to poor old Kennedy for his lifetime. My young folk, full of youth's romance and inherent belief in goodness, felt quite sure it would be so; nay, I think the younger ones actually imagined his lordship would do all manner of noble and generous actions—even to driving to the farm in a coach and six, personally to express his regard for the Kennedys—the very next time he happened to be on his property.

"We started her off—poor body!—with many good wishes on both sides: talked of her very often for a week or so, and then, hearing no more, we concluded all was well so far; the whirl of London life swallowed us up, and the subject dropped out of our memories.

"It might have been February—no, I have the letter here, and it is dated 12th March—that my husband got the following from Mr. Kennedy, written in a feeble old man's hand, but carefully composed and spelt, as became one of the well-educated peasantry of the North; one, too, who though only a farmer, could count his forefathers for more generations than many an owner of a magnificent 'place.'

"DEAR SIR,—I beg to return you my sincerest thanks for your unremitting kindness to my wife and daughter when in London: when they came home and told us, the whole family were delighted to hear of such kindness being shown them. Before Mrs. Kennedy came home, a friend got a paper made out in our favour, to prevent anything being done against us; this friend was home in the boat along with Mrs. Kennedy, also officers from —, to get us put out. I went in the morning to call upon the factor, and see if he had got the telegram from his lordship, but I could not see him, and I asked his clerk if he knew if he had got it, but he said he had heard no word about it. I told him the telegram was certainly sent, for that Mrs. Kennedy saw the valet go to the telegraph office at Oxbridge with it. The officers came to the farm, but this friend of ours got them stopped. We learnt afterwards that the telegram had been misdirected, and so it went to another place, and did not reach the factor till too late. We have got no answer from his young lordship to the letter you was kind enough to help Mrs. Kennedy write. We have sold part of our sheep in order to get some better kind, as we have been hearing that it has been said we were turned out because our farm was not fully stocked; but the Order in Council about the cattle disease, preventing cattle being removed from one place to another, and the uncertain situation we are placed in, has hindered this being done. But if we get encouragement from his lordship, we will stock the farm, and get on as soon as possible. If you will be kindly pleased, say in your wisdom, if anything can be done, and if we need to write his lordship any more till we hear from himself.

"I am, dear sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"ANDREW KENNEDY."

"On receipt of this letter, we all laid our heads together to consider what had best be done. The result was that Mr. Kennedy wrote a second letter to the young

nobleman—sufficient, we thought, to have moved a heart of stone—and my husband got it forwarded immediately by what he believed to be even a surer channel than the first one had gone by. And, meantime, we made private inquiries as to what sort of young fellow he really was: and, I must confess, we heard nothing ill of him: nothing but faults of youth—which a few more years may mend, and cause him to grow up a man worthy of his important destiny: worthy of his ancestors and himself. Oh, that, for many sakes besides his own, this poor lad, left orphaned at a time a lad most needs a father's care, and pinnacle'd on a height where the bravest and steadiest could hardly walk without tottering—oh, that it may yet be so!

“After sending this letter, for two months more we heard nothing from the Laignlands. Then came the following, headed by another date, which the minute I saw, I knew the poor old farmer's fate was decided:—

“*Fairbank Cottage, May 3rd.*

“DEAR SIR,—I am sorry to say that we never received any letter from his lordship; and we had to submit to be ejected from our farm and home, so that we are now for a short time in a little cottage belonging to my brother, James Kennedy. I called upon the factor to-day, to see if he had any place for us now; but I got no encouragement. He had said the family could make us comfortable with another house if we left the Farm; but there is no word of that now. We would have written to you sooner, but Mrs. Kennedy has been so grieved in her mind, and she had no time to spare, being busy removing and packing up furniture until we get some home elsewhere. She still remembers the kindness shown her by you and your kind family, and bids me say she has a small box preparing with a few articles to send to Mrs. Burns, as a small token of her gratitude for the kindness shown her. You can let Mr. — know how we have been used, and how the young lord forgot us in our distress. If his lordship would have given us a small lot of ground and a house, we should have taken it kind, though we lost our farm: and so we would now—but, in the way he forgot us, we have no encouragement to ask any other favour.

“I am, my dear sir,

“Your sincere well-wisher,

“ANDREW KENNEDY.”

“That was all. No more complaints: no blame: no wild democratic outcry against the lord of the soil. The old man had been brought up to respect ‘the powers that be,’ and to submit, unmurmuring, in his stern, patient, unquestioning Presbyterian faith, to the ordering of Providence. Unto human injustice it is possible to submit too much: and yet there is a submission which is not merely wise, but heroic. I own, that poor old man's letter—in its brevity involving such a world of grief and loss, and that, too, at the close of life, when loss is quite irreparable—touched most deeply both my husband and me. And—well, there lies before you Mrs Kennedy's butter.”

I tasted it, for the second time feeling “like to greet,” but with a far deeper emotion than the mere remembrance of the lovely country about the Laignlands. * * * *

I should like to end this tale—a true tale, be it again understood—with the bright winding-up exacted by “poetical justice.” I should like to state how—“better late than never”—his young lordship had recognized his responsibilities; and though the carelessly-worded telegram did fail of its object, though the promised appointment was broken, and the humble entreating letters left unanswered, possibly even unread, still some good angel had brought the matter to the young man’s memory, with favourable results for poor Kennedy’s few remaining years. So that, though he could not be reinstated in his farm—nay (for let us hold the balance of justice fairly between poor and rich, the rich who are often in reality so painfully, humiliatingly poor), although it might even be inevitable, for some recondite reason, that he should have been removed from it—still there was found for him that “little lot of ground” hard by somewhere, where the old man could live comfortably and content until the end of his days.

But nothing of the sort has happened, or seems likely to happen, so far as I know. I can only tell the story, and leave it; as we are obliged to leave so many things in this world—sad, unfinished; unable alike to see the reason of them, or the final settlement of them. Only there is One above us who sees all.



THE POET AT HIS WIFE'S GRAVE.

OH! how I longed to set you like a queen,
 Above all sorrows in some happy place:
 To crown you with my triumphs, and efface
 The memory of such cares as came between
 Our most dear love. I could not stay your tears
 When critics blamed, or publishers said “Nay;”
 Although I called myself more wise than they,
 And prophesied a harvest with the years.
 And now I stand among my sheaves alone,
 My golden sheaves: that only make me weep
 To think I cannot wake you from your sleep.
 Oh, Sweet! my strength is spent, the race is won,
 And fain I would be with you where you rest,
 One little child soft cradled on your breast.

M. BETHAM EDWARDS.

UP AN AFRICAN RIVER.

I SUPPOSE everybody knows Dr. Livingstone's narrative of his journey across Africa and descent of the Zambézi. People got the book as soon as it appeared, and read it, in spite of the lengthiness of some of the details, with as much eagerness as the last new novel. Certainly I did, and never skipped a page. But whether the reader may or may not be curious to know who I am, it is of course impossible for me to guess; and perhaps the idea is a little conceited. At any rate, all I intend to say about myself here is that a few months after reading Dr. Livingstone's book, I found matters so arranged as to enable me to become still better acquainted with the scenes he described, and if I fail in my attempt to add a few touches to the picture, it is entirely my own fault.

It is the morning of May-day, 1861. The little steamer *Pioneer*, under Dr. Livingstone's direction, has carried us down the Mozambique Channel, the sea is soon to be changed for the welcome smoothness of the Zambézi, the Kongone bar of which, with its white lines of breakers, only separates us from the river waters that glisten in front.

The appearance of the land is not very inviting, yet by no means so dismal as we have been led to expect. A wide beach of light yellow sand spreads away at low water to the flat country beyond, with forests of the mangrove extending evenly along the margin like a broad fringe. As far as the eye can see on either side this monotonous line remains unbroken, and a slight gap is distinguishable where the Kongone mouth-stream makes its way out to the sea, emerging suddenly from the obscurity of the forest.

But there is only just time to make a rough sketch. Steam is up, they are hard at work with the capstan; we are going to cross the bar exactly. Taking a north-west course, we strike the channel and steam slowly in our anchorage in five fathoms of water. The intermittent cry of the breakers, the lead warns us that the depth is gradually decreasing, and the distance, which looked like nothing more than rows of white fringe is three, two, one, begin to assume most dangerous dimensions. Steadily on, "Forward, three, two by the mark," and now with a heave and rush underneath the ship, and a "swish" as the surf dashes high up over the deck, we are carried through breakers on the bar itself. Again we are suddenly lifted at the trough of the foam of the breaking wave, and we lie for a few seconds like a mountain the sea, with a ridge of surf sweeping on before us, and a leadsmen. "How of water rolling up behind. "Quarter less two," shouts tell, sir, but look will it be next time; shall we touch, G——?" "A thousand suspense as out," replies the old quartermaster; and we wait as the waters whizz past the little vessel rises once more, and once more the Atlantic. No, "Two and leave us in a hollow that would have done for a fathom off the bottom by the mark;" we are all right; but little more, pass us by; the steady is rather a close shave. Another roller or two while the breakers are cry of the leadsmen shows a still increasing bar is safely crossed, and lower and further between; and at last the

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we pass easily down the channel into the smooth water of the river. The sight of the tremendous waves, however, rolling on over the lower part of the bar was quite sufficient to remind us of the sort of scrape we must have got into had we been so unfortunate as to miss the channel and ground on the ridge; and we feel heartily thankful as it is that a few minutes ago we were on board our trusty little steamer, and spared the probable chance of capsizing in a man-of-war's "whaler."

Of the seven mouths of the Zambézi, the Kongone, or Inyamisengo, as the natives call it, forms decidedly the best entrance. The breakers on this bar do not extend over more than five hundred yards, and with a favourable wind the passage can be easily effected in boats. But at the Quelimane bar, which the Portuguese use to enter the river, the waves continue to roll for a much greater distance, while their height on the calmest day increases the danger of crossing. At the Kongone the breakers, caused by the bar-shoal which runs out from Pearl Island, are scarcely perceptible in fine weather; but when the wind is at all high, and especially if blowing off the sea, they come in with such size and violence that the bar is often impassable for days. The width of the river near the mouth is about a mile at low water, when the "Pearl" relinquishes its insular character, and united by a somewhat higher run of the beach, becomes a point of the mainland. The banks vary from three to twelve feet in height; and in the middle of the stream, just above the entrance, lies a low stretch of sand called "Pelican Island," which is covered by the flowing tide.

The anchor is dropped, and steam blown off, to the infinite surprise, no doubt, of some monkeys in the neighbouring trees, and the proposal is made for a stroll on shore to see if we can do anything with our rifles. Fresh spoor of buck has been reported on the sand, and the prospect of fresh meat is welcome after our long fare on ship's provisions. The party having agreed to take different directions, I chose the rough track of a hippopotamus for my path, which soon brought me to the bank of a small stream with wide borders of mangrove bush on both sides, growing out of bare black mud. The water flowed still and deep between the greasy-looking banks; and fully expecting to see a huge brown head and nose come surging up to the surface, I brought my rifle forward to be ready for a shot. But my first mark on the Zambézi was not to be a hippopotamus, for I soon learned that these side streams are only his haunts at night, and that he returns at daybreak to the main river, where he remains until twilight again induces him to wander. The spot in which I was standing was a mangrove swamp, the prominent feature of most tropical shores. It was smaller than those which form so large a part of the Zambézi Delta near the coast, but exactly the same in character: belts of mangrove extending along the margins of the streams, which streams either connect the large mouth-branches or flow on to the sea from them as auxiliary outlets. Of the mangrove tree itself there are several species, some merely low bushes, others growing to a height of from ten to forty feet. Here is one of the larger kinds, with foliage like the rhododendron. From the main stem, at a distance of from four or five feet from the ground, slender, leafless branches are thrown out, which curve downward and fix themselves in the soil so as

to form upper roots for the additional support of the tree. It is a curious adaptation to the nature of the ground in which it grows, simply thick black mud to the depth of above a foot, without a blade of vegetation on the entire surface. The seed-pods of this tree show another peculiarity suited to the place. They are narrow and tapering, like the blade of a short sword. When ripe they fall point foremost and bury themselves in the mud, and in this way the seed is enabled to reach the firm soil below, where the young roots may obtain a stronger hold.

Underneath the mangroves, singular little fish, with heads like frogs, disport themselves in numbers on the top of the mud, moving along in short jumps by means of the tail and a pair of powerful side-fins. These frog-fish are to be found in every part of the Delta, and literally swarm on the edges of the streams during the heat of the rainy season. Then, you are completely bewildered by the multitude of small land-crabs which rush about wherever the mud has got hardened by exposure: their little red legs twinkle away, carrying off the tiny black balls of bodies in rapid curves; and as they dive sidelong into their holes like diminutive burrows, the scene is changed, in a moment, and the hitherto teeming mud-tract becomes a miniature wilderness.

Grassy tracts, often of considerable extent, lie between the mangrove swamps, covered with pea-like creepers bearing a rich purple flower. The long, tough shoots of these creepers among the thick and tangled grass form one of the greatest possible nuisances, getting across the instep as you walk leisurely along, and bringing you every now and then to an unexpected standstill, preceded by a smart jerk forward. If you were to get a number of sheepnets, spread them in succession over a meadow-field in England, and then make an attempt to walk across it, you would not have a bad illustration of my further progress after I left the mangrove swamp for some jungle on my left, among which the graceful dwarf-fan palm grew in profusion.

The soil is firm and dry on these open tracts of jungle, and they abound in every part with a variety of insect life. Huge beetles drone past, and threaten to extinguish one of your eyes in their reckless flight. Richly-coloured dragonflies dart about, and settle coquettishly on dead branches and earth heaps, for which they seem here to have a decided preference. The busiest of tiresome flies in every possible shape and colour buzz around with obtrusive intimacy, while elegant and beautiful butterflies float in the sunlight, or vanish over the palms and shrubs like living gems. The great green mangrove fly, with his yellow head, skims past, keeping up a continued moan; and it is very well if he does pass, let me tell you, or a pang like that of some one slowly pressing a thorn into your flesh will teach you to keep a sharp look out when his moaning suddenly stops another time. Large locusts with red wings rise with a whizz at your feet, apparently possessed with the idea of soon becoming a species of partridge: it is the likeliest thing in the world that you will at first mistake them for quails, which rise with a similar noise, and are really only a size larger.

Then, what myriads of ants on the ground—some lively little red or black fellows, others with red bodies and grey-coloured extremities. It is most amusing to watch their movements as they seem to run to and fro on im-

possible errands, and come into violent collisions, afterwards amicably arranged in brief conferences on sandy patches, where they bustle and wind about in an everlasting maze of motion. These ants are harmless, and may be seen wherever the surface is dry and exposed; but others of a most ferocious character, half an inch long, and armed with a formidable pair of jaws like hooked and sharp-pointed forceps, are to be found in moist and sheltered places. They travel in long compact lines about a couple of inches in width, and by all means give them a wide berth if they are seen crossing the path, or perhaps making their way by your shaded resting-place; otherwise you will probably discover their propensities in a rather unpleasant way. Only touch one of them with your boot, and—if you are foolish enough to despise “knickerbockers,”—not less than a hundred will be up inside your trousers and over your person in an instant, where fixing their nippers in the parts you most cherish, they will writhe, and pull, and wrench like absolute little fiends, and seem as if they would tear out your very flesh if their rage could give them the power. There is nothing for it but to strip yourself of every particle of clothing, and pick them off one by one with your fingers as patiently as the pain permits.

Birds are plentiful enough in the Delta, especially the bush-creepers; but there are few with bright plumage, and still fewer musical. Game is abundant, including the waterbuck (*nakoswé*) and several kinds of smaller antelope (*boaré*, *poyo*, *msengo*, &c.), while the swampy borders of the streams, with their dense forests, are favourite resorts of the buffalo (*njati*). But to-day I had no chance of testing the powers of my new rifle. One of the party had been more successful, and brought on board a small “*msengo*,” or bushbuck, which made a splendid supper, and was voted “capital.”

Passing into the Luabo, or principal mouth of the Zambézi, which gives its name to the whole of the surrounding district, we remain for a few days cutting wood for the steamer, and on the seventh of May start fairly up the river. The mangrove swamps continue for a mile or two above the coast, but are then displaced by the skirts of impenetrable forests in many parts of the banks. And what wonderful forests they are in their wild luxuriance! No sound, except that of their four-footed denizens, ever breaks the silence, of unknown ages. No path has ever been made through the dense and curious undergrowth that covers the ground for miles. Not an eye has seen, in their far recesses, the overhanging mass of intricate net-work, as the long cable-like creepers extend from branch to branch, and cross and intertwine under the thick canopy of leaves. We can only guess what it is from the tokens on either side.

The variety of trees is endless, with their rich covering of green, but not more so than the climbers which hang from them in festoons, or the fantastic parasitical plants that droop from their boughs. The queen of palms, the graceful pandanus, appears at intervals in the distance, recalling familiar scenes as it tapers above the forest like the church-spire of some dear old English village. In many places on the bank the beautiful yellow blossoms of the “*mlola*,” changing to dark red before they fall, mingle their brighter hue with the purple flowers of *convolvuli*; in others the long scimitar-like

Pods of the "*taba maritima*" hang over the stream, and drop the bean, with a diameter of two inches, into the deep muddy waters that wash the roots. A little further on again the eye wanders through ranks of tall mangrove trees, the gloom thrown by their shadow over the slimy desolation of the swamp forming a singular contrast with the sunlight on the foliage above. To one accustomed to the wild flowers and ferns, sheltered by the grand forest oaks of old England, it is a strange, and perhaps not very inviting scene: nor does the slope of mud left at ebb of tide along the edge of all the Delta streams help to make the prospect in any way more agreeable. Well, as the old poem says,

"Everye white will have its blacke,
And everye sweete its sowre;"

so it must be confessed that the Zambési forms no exception, and that the picture has its dark side as well as its bright.

Whatever we may think of the forests of the Delta,—and they are certainly very grand,—they have one great disadvantage, that of shutting out the breeze, and making the air sultry and oppressive. The river comes down in a fine broad stream, only it is rather muddy, especially at the sides, and the amount of decaying vegetable matter floating in heaps on the surface, or lying under the banks, is decidedly unwholesome. In some places we can almost see miasma steaming up where the sun strikes hottest,—and no wonder, for we are in the stronghold of Zambési fever, and none of us expect to be so lucky as to escape. The attack usually commences with a sharp pain in the back, accompanied by severe headache, and most probably sickness. Then follows a long fit of shivers, making the heaviest blankets acceptable, with the thermometer at ninety-six degrees in the shade, and after that several hours of fever-heat, attended in some cases with profuse perspiration. This over, you soon feel perfectly well again, though rather weak and nervous; and if omitted when the premonitory pain in the back was felt, now is the time to have recourse to calomel and rhubarb, followed up soon after by a strong dose of quinine. It ought not to be less than four or five grains: and this must be repeated at intervals of a few hours for the next day or two, or the paroxysm will recur sooner or later, according as the fever is intermittent or remittent. Should it not be checked after these almost infallible specifics, coma sets in at last, and then the issue is clear—no article of yours will ever be written for this or any other magazine! The worst of it is, however, that one attack does not lessen the chance of another, but rather the contrary; and you may heartily congratulate yourself on having a good stock of calomel and quinine, with a proportionate amount of other medical items it is unnecessary to enumerate.

But we are all well or convalescent as we approach the head of the Delta, rejoicing that we have got through the worst part of the journey. An overpowering sense of unhealthiness, in that swampy waste, gave our pill-boxes and quinine bottles such a novel character—quite a friendly here-I-am-at-a-pinch appearance—in their cupboard, that we could really believe they contained confections rather than physic! But no sooner is the region of

mud and mangroves left behind than the air loses its oppressiveness and becomes fresher; while the country, opening out in grassy steppes or picturesque woodlands, begins to look a little more as if people *could* live in it. Not indeed that the lower Delta-lands are altogether without inhabitants; for many strips of drier country, displacing the swamps, are sought for the dwellings of the "mud-people,"—so called in contradistinction to the "sand-people," living higher up the Delta; but where a malaria-proof native would flourish to a good old age, the European would either die soon, or be a shrivelled-up, sour old man at forty. These strips of fertile land,—like the upper Delta levels through which we are passing,—are dotted with groves of cocoa-nut, mango, fig, and cashew-nut trees; while extensive fields of rice, maize, beans, and cassava bushes, with their elegant foliage, surround the huts of the natives, half hidden by screens of bananas. The whole of the higher Delta districts are rather thickly populated; and the mild, easy disposition of the people so far favours the dominion of the Portuguese, that, however odious in other respects, it at least gives them security from outer enemies.

Mazaro, a large village, half Portuguese, half native, marks the head of the Delta, about eighty miles above the coast. Crowds of the inhabitants appear on the bank to watch our approach, the *Pioneer* going on "chaji" (by itself) and being an object of universal admiration. The village consists of fifty or sixty good-sized huts, square in form and well built, though the materials are only reeds and mud, with a small stockaded fort erected by the Portuguese, whose flag waves on a low staff near it. Beyond this stands the house of Signor Vianna,—a great landholder and slave-owner,—surrounded by reed-outhouses for cattle and grain, and the smaller huts of the slaves. By means of the latter the Signor cultivates extensively, and does a good trade on the Zambesi in oilseed and cassava-root, and in rice, beans, and native corn, which are in great request among the colonists for their domestic slaves. In times of drought the settlements on the Upper Zambesi draw all their supplies from the Delta regions; for while the harvests never fail on these lower lands, in the dry country above scarcely three years ever pass without a season of scarcity.

At last then we are fairly out of the Delta; and as we leave Mazaro the air comes fresh and freely over the broad grassy plains that stretch away on both sides of the river. The cocoa-nut palm is now getting rare on the banks, but in its room appears the tufted palmyra, here covering immense tracts, or elsewhere standing in gaunt solitude. Far away are to be seen clumps of bush, and beyond them forests of magnificent trees, where the natives make the large canoes, or "kôches," as tribute for their Portuguese masters. Behind these forests the country rises in rapid undulations in front; on the left the plains continue to the horizon, and on the right the distant view is bounded by dark-blue mountain peaks. Our attention is drawn to the nearest one, encircled by groups of small hills, about thirty miles off: it is Morambala, not far from the confluence of the Shire, marking the first approach to highland country.

The width of the Zambesi above Mazaro varies from half a mile to more than two miles, where the soft yielding banks have been worn away by the

current. The dry season (from May to October) has just commenced, so that the river, having been in flood during the two previous months, is beginning to get low and leave bare the shoals and sandbanks formed by the force of the stream. These are completely submerged in the rainy season, when navigation is tolerably easy, as a deep channel can everywhere be traced by the colour and appearance of the water. But the existence of these sand-banks, shifting as they do annually and reforming in other places, will always prove a difficulty in navigating the Zambézi; nor will it ever be practically navigable,—should modern enterprise at any time attempt to make it so,—unless with flat-bottomed vessels of light draught like those on some of the American rivers. And then come the rapids of Kebrabasa,—only a few miles above Jette, and three hundred from the sea. No one knows how this difficulty is to be got over, unless, in the present days of limited liability companies, a canal could be taken round the falls, or unless steamers could be built sufficiently small for the narrow chasm, yet powerful enough to stem the torrent rushing with its pent-up waters between the walls of perpendicular rock. After Kebrabasa, however, the river presents no serious obstacle to further progress, until the vapour-columns are visible above the Victoria Falls.

During the middle of the dry season, when the water is often so shallow as to prevent canoes passing along, the Zambézi presents a very remarkable appearance. You proceed through a region feebly described as sterile. Around you in the sun lies an archipelago of sand-banks, white, glistening, and bare, except for occasional groups of water-birds, and what you will no doubt take for a sun-dried log on the edge of the sand. But if so, you are wrong, and you observe your mistake as the assumed log, evidently mistrusting your intentions, suddenly elevates an unmistakable alligator snout, and shambles lazily into the water on four previously invisible legs. No wonder a shudder comes over you at the idea of bathing, though you are in latitude sixteen degrees fifteen minutes south, and the mid-day sun burns down on your head and back like fire: neither is your aversion to the water likely to be at all lessened as some insignificant-looking specks are pointed out on the surface, and you are quietly told that each one of them is the crown of an alligator's head! Some of these Zambézi sand islands are of considerable extent, with flat tops, and high cliff-like sides: you glide easily up the stream that curves in and out among them; but as you go on in the same way, hour after hour, it seems so like threading the mazes of a wild and intricate labyrinth, that at last a consciousness of inextricability possesses you, that peculiar suffocating feeling of never being able to get out again.

Seven or eight miles beyond Mazaro we reach Shupanga, a village in a "prazo" with the same name. Close to the river stands a roomy house, built of bricks, with a tiled roof, and, like all the colonial dwellings of the Portuguese, one-storied. Its last occupant was Donna Pascoa, a lady of repute in these parts as the possessor of a body of soldiers, or rather armed slaves, with whom for many years she made a successful resistance against the incursions of some southern Kafirs. They are called Manhambosi here, and Mapsite further north, and belong to a numerous and powerful tribe, who

under a warlike chief, Manikose, became notorious among the Portuguese as the "fighting Landeens." This name, the result of frequent forays on the detached settlements of the Zambézi, is a perfect bugbear to the colonists, who readily pay a periodical black mail to avoid their depredations. The Donna was a noted character in many other respects; but having died several years ago, the house since her time has not been inhabited.

The native tribes on the Zambézi are now very indistinct, though the language varies in dialect about every ten miles. Except in their tribal relations they have been little disturbed by the Portuguese, whose real territory lies on both sides of the river about three hundred miles above the Delta, but does not extend far inland. It is divided into *prazos* differing in area, the greater number of which are the property of the Colonial Government, and let to private individuals on long leases at a merely nominal rent. The Delta lands are all leased in the same way; the fact of one person possessing a farm of forty or fifty square miles being more common than the holding of four or five hundred acres in England. The inhabitants, called "*colonos*," or *serfs*, live by cultivating the land, for which they pay an annual tribute per head; usually a bag of corn, rice, or beans, or sometimes, if these are wanting, slaves! The chiefs of the villages are trusty slaves of the proprietor, bearing the official title of "*Mwanamambo*." Their duty is to represent the proprietor among his "*colonos*," to watch his interests, and to collect the tribute as soon as it becomes due. But they derive no profit from the crops, nor do they receive any kind of payment except the daily rations of food which are allowed them in common with the inferior slaves. Sometimes a portion of land is given up for their own use, especially when their villages are distant from the settlements: in such cases their huts are superior to those commonly built, and they assume a much more important position among the natives. Yet this is their only privilege, without the hope of freedom to lighten their lot. When estates are near towns, or the owners live upon them, the land is cultivated by regular agricultural slaves. They go out in bands at sunrise under the superintendence of an inferior "*mwanamambo*," who summons them with a horn, and walks about while they are at work, armed with a terrific whip. There are a few free native landowners, but they give themselves great airs, and the Portuguese regard them as an intolerable nuisance.

It is hard to have to confess that the policy of the Zambézi colonist, and especially that of his half-caste heir, is simply unmitigated oppression. The idea of education is altogether tabooed; equally so that of morals. The "*négro basta*" is utterly incapable of either. But it is also depressing to find how soon the natives themselves become debased, and how lost they are to the sense of self-respect which alone sustains the value of liberty. "*Colonos*" are trained into the most adroit slave-dealers, and they have often been known to sell themselves into lower servitude, and go and purchase slaves of their own with the proceeds! Nevertheless instances are not wanting to show that a feeling of wrong remains uppermost; and if so great a part of the population did not consist of important slaves, or fugitives from war-stricken tribes, it is probable that the Portuguese would soon cease to be masters of the Zambézi. And however such facts as the above mark the degradation of the

African, they degrade more deeply the *civilized* foreigner, who, having taken possession of his land, proceeds to darken his humiliation by adding to slavery horrors which a Mrs. Stowe could hardly exaggerate.

The slave of a Portuguese commandant on the Zambézi was once seen by a companion of mine chained to a post in a deep hole, emaciated, and wounded on the back with repeated flogging; the most miserable object it is possible to conceive. My friend pleaded for him and he was released. He had been guilty of the heinous crime of attempting to run away. Some time afterwards he is out at work. His master calls him; but being on the open bank and the wind against him, his name has to be called three times before he hears and answers with becoming alacrity. He is severely beaten with a heavy three-thonged whip of buck-hide. The poor man, under the shame and pain of undeserved punishment, goes to a fellow-slave and complains, "I did nothing. I could not hear him call. My heart will be bitter a long time for this." The master is informed of his contumacy; summons him, and with orthodox voice and manner asks, "Why did you say your heart was bitter because you were punished? Haven't I a right to whip you? Aren't you my slave? Is not your heart, and blood, and bone mine, to do anything I like with?" The slave, it appears, did not think so, as he soon after ran away with some others, who very fortunately for them were not retaken. The master himself told me the story of the flogging, and showed me the whip with the utmost sang-froid: yet he was not a Legree, nor had he ever read *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Here is another story on the same authority—a slave-woman beaten to death. Her fault is taking part in a native superstitious ceremony, for which she is accused of witchcraft. Her master (a half-caste) admits her guilt, and condemns her to be thrown to the alligators. As they are taking her to the river, a free native chief meets them, and remonstrating against the severity of the sentence, advises that instead of killing, they should be content with giving her a flogging. The master, a little ashamed of his cruelty perhaps, but more frightened of its reaching the ears of the authorities, relaxes his purpose and has her whipped; but so severely that she dies under the lash! I was one day at the commandant's residence. "Who is your friend?" I asked, as a visitor took his departure. "Do you call him my friend, or my neighbour?" was the reply. "His brother beat a slave-woman to death, and directed by the governor (of Quelimane), I had him brought here and put in chains. But as no further instructions followed, I was obliged to release him; and the only result is that both he and his family try to keep in favour by frequently paying me visits and sending presents!"

Another incident illustrates rather forcibly the native's sense of wrong. A certain Portuguese Signor, near Shupanga, formed the not uncommon habit of spending a great deal of his time in drinking spirits, and when less than half conscious from the effects, making his slaves fan him as he lay on his bed. When sober, his principal amusement was ill-treating them. On one occasion his so-called native wife happened to incur his resentment for want of proper attention, and in fear of the consequences took refuge with some of her friends. Having found out where she was, he followed and brought her away in spite of

most earnest entreaties, and soon after had her deliberately shot before his eyes by one of her fellow-slaves. The governor of Quelimane was in the neighbourhood at the time, but witnesses were wanting to prove the killing of a negro, for, of course, no native's word is evidence! Not long afterwards he was crossing the river in a canoe, as usual half intoxicated. His own slaves were paddling; but the canoe was large, the weather perfectly calm, and there were no sunken trees for them to run against. Yet significantly enough an upset took place, and no helping hand saved the murderer from his fate, though every negro on the Zambesi knows well how to swim.

The truth is the Portuguese are afraid of their slaves, and think they can only overawe them by cruelty and oppression. The legal enactments of the province of Mozambique on slavery would, if thoroughly carried out, make it as mild an institution as it possibly could be; but as the slaves themselves are ignorant of the laws, and it is the interest of their owners to keep them so, the effect is the same as if they never existed. The colonists, living isolated as so many of them do, and often far remote from any legal supervision, act pretty much as they please: while governors, commandants, and other officials, being known to countenance and actually engage in slave-traffic, would hardly be the persons to make strict investigations. Thus the law requires every slave to be registered at the Custom House of Quelimane, and none can be legally kept in servitude unless entered in proper form. Yet this is not done in the case of two-thirds of the existing number, who are therefore virtually free if they did not know it. Again, no slave ought to be retained as such more than seven years after purchase, the theory being that in that time he redeems his price by service; but there is not a slave bought on the Zambesi who does not remain so as long as he lives. The children of bought slaves, too, are free, if any one would only volunteer the suicidal information. It is illegal for any private person to inflict punishment on his slave; who ought to be sent to prison, or flogged at the public whipping-post by a soldier; but this law is certainly infringed in the most cruel manner possible. In fact, while a poor state like that of Portugal attempts to maintain her colonial dependencies by leaving her officials there to shift with shadows of salaries, they will try to create a substance out of something; and if legal enactments interfere with the profits of the slave-trade, or the advantages of slave possession, they are quietly set aside, and no despatch to the home government ever holds a list of delinquents. It is harsh, but too like truth, what my Zambesi friend,—thief catching thieves, I fear,—testified of his fellow-colonists, "The Portuguese here are rascals!"

GEORGE PERRY.

ART IN ANTWERP.

A GOSSIP ABOUT PETER PAUL RUBENS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CITOYENNE JACQUELINE."

RUBENS was in his thirty-first year when he was suddenly recalled, by the last illness of his mother, from Genoa to Flanders, which he had left in his boyish hope and promise. The good mother, to whom her family had owed so much, was now seventy years of age, and lay on her death-bed.

Peter Paul was domestic in his habits and affectionate in his temper; and whether or not he felt some remorse for his long lingering in Italy, which had prevented his mother receiving her just reward in seeing the accomplishment of her son's hope, certainly, after receiving the warning of the stroke which was impending, there was no further dallying with the perpetual danger of accident, and the sure decay of years. Peter Paul posted home with all his energy, but only to find forlorn Antwerp in deepest black; for the eyes which had watched over his cradle were closed for ever on the reverence and duty of his manhood. It was not for such a return home that the proud, triumphant, spirited painter had prayed, and longed, and waited. He was cut to the heart by the unexpected loss of his mother; and he had not yet learnt the lesson taught him later in life, to fly from the influence of impotent and restless impatience, and seek distraction in new places and faces, new obligations of work, responsibility, and honour. On his melancholy reception in Antwerp—the city with which he was to be identified, and which he was to glorify by his genius—he retired into the abbey of St. Michael, where his mother was buried; and, against all entreaties and seductions, remained there in strict seclusion for four months, with no companionship save that of his books and pencil. If his conduct was significant of the sharp grief and passionate disappointment of the true son, so also was his subsequent behaviour significant of the whole man. When his mourning for his mother was ended, Rubens felt at first drawn away from home, by the powerful associations of his early manhood spent in Italy, and his strong constitutional inclination to turn his back on what was painful and mournful; and he thought of setting his face towards Italy and the house of his attached patron, the Duke of Mantua. On second thoughts, however, he was induced, by his practical common sense, and the honest patriotism aroused in him, to listen to the solicitations of his own sovereigns, the archduke and archduchess Albert and Isabella, to settle in his native land, and bless it by his genius. But he declined the invitation to the court, preferring to remain in Antwerp in its desertion and silence, probably feeling that it was better suited to his mood at the time, and better fitted for the studies he was bent upon pursuing. There was more than one reason in the choice; for Peter Paul was not only a favourite of all the kings and queens with whom he came in contact, but he, in return, cherished toward them a loyal admiration, tolerance, and devotion. His was the nature, brave, contented, and sensuous, on which the circum-

stances of royalty—its state, show, and air of chivalry—made their utmost impression, and to which they were welcome as to a child or a woman.

No sooner had Peter Paul fixed on dwelling in Flanders, than he entered on his new position with all the keenness of a man with powers capable of accomplishing his purposes, and ever resolute not to let the grass grow beneath his feet. So he resolved to take to himself a young wife, to fill up the sorrowful blank which the vanished venerable figure, moving slowly in its sombre drapery, had left in his life. And he would build a house fit either for a painter or a prince; such a structure as Andrea Mantegna reared for himself at Mantua, and Tintoretto at Venice. He would collect around him a school of such artists as even Raphael could not command; and he would maintain a correspondence with all the great spirits of his age. The world would contend for his pictures, while he presided an acknowledged leader of his fellows. We will see how Peter Paul realized his lawful desire, and filled up his great programme.

Rubens was so eager to accomplish the first act of his play, that he married within a year after his mother's death, in the same church where she was buried and where he mourned—that of St. Michael. Of course it was a long time before his magnificent house was finished; so that the young couple had to reside for some time in the house of the bride's father, who was a man of substance, and a magistrate of Antwerp. The wife whom Rubens married in his thirty-second year, in the mellow month of October, 1609, was Isabella, sometimes called Elizabeth, daughter of John Brant, and niece to Maria de Moy, Rubens' elder brother Philip's wife.

That the marriage was a happy one is as certain as that the great artist's wife was neither more nor less than a fair, buxom, kind, blithe woman. If ever painter's brush could show contentment, certainly that of Rubens dashed it in on the canvas in every different group, with affectionate enthusiasm and constancy. That this wife, as well as his second wife, was drawn from the immediate circle of his kindred, was a sign how the warm, impulsive, erratic heart yet clung and clave with all its natural energies to home. Finally—it may read like a satire on matrimony, but it is, nevertheless, true—Peter Paul was eminently happy in both of his matrimonial ventures, not only because he was strong, gifted, renowned, and, above all, sweet-tempered, but because his standard of humanity was not a high one! He looked for little more in a mate than a bonnie face and a complacent temper; and he was sufficiently master of himself in the pursuit to know when he found these. Though he valued Isabella Brant after her death, on the ground of her intelligence and freedom from the weaknesses of women, he set greater store on Helena Fourment, the child pet of the man of threescore.

Married and settled, Peter Paul went on apace at just what most people would think he ought to have executed first—his house. It was really the marvel of the painter's generation; and, though little more than the defaced and mutilated shell of it remains, it is still sought out and gazed at with deep interest by the visitors to Antwerp.

It was in the Italian style. The front was painted in fresco by the master's own hands. It was built in a court, with a large garden behind,

where he collected and cultivated the rarest trees and flowers which he had seen on his travels. Between the house and the garden was the crowning glory of the establishment—the Rotunda, lighted from a cupola, similar to the Pantheon at Rome, in which he spent many happy days arranging, and still more reviewing, his choice assemblage of works of art, which even his old friend the Duke of Mantua might have envied. There were antique statues, busts, bas-reliefs, medals, coins, onyxes, agates, cameos, and, especially, pictures by the great masters, which he had bought or copied while in Italy. The list of these last included several of Leonardo and Raphael, and many Giulio Romanos, Titians, Tintoretto, Paul Veronese, with great pictures of his own school and the schools of his contemporaries. These appropriate jewels of “the prince of painters and of gentlemen” were not only the fruit of his energy and taste, but of his rapidly growing fortune. It is said that the house cost him sixty thousand florins.

Thus worthily housed, about the year 1610, Peter Paul proceeded not merely to dwell in state and bounty, but to make hay while the sun shone. He used all his powers to preserve and extend the source of his prosperity, by daily bouts of manly labour as stupendous, yet buoyant, as his projects of fame and pleasure. He rose early—in summer at four. Immediately afterwards, in contradiction to the insinuations of his French admirers, he heard mass, and then went to work, and while working had a person to read to him from classical authors—chiefly Plutarch, Livy, Cicero, Seneca, or the poets. He received strangers—to whom he was of all great men the most royally accessible and affable—at his easel, and conversed with them without being any way disturbed. An hour before dinner he gave to recreation, science, or politics, or to *standing looking at his pictures*. He was temperate at table, although gout, which was hereditary and constitutional, found him out soon, and followed him hard. Indeed, there is a suspicion that, to the excitable temperament of Peter Paul Rubens, that which would have been temperance in another was self-indulgence with him. Ordinary excess in him would have been simply madness and destruction. After dinner he worked again till evening, and then rode an hour or two on one of the Andalusian horses which he affected so much. On his return home, he would receive at supper a few friends—mostly men of learning and artists. But to this congenial society were soon added frequent visitors from the number of travellers of rank who were passing through the provinces, and from the roll of haughty Spanish grandees and arrogant German barons—the courtiers of the archduke. The sovereigns, the archduke, and the archduchess themselves were visitors occasionally.

Rubens' rapidity of design and execution, and the spirit and the breeding of the man, are the true explanations of his long hours of work, rather than his physical strength or immunity from injury by undue exertion. The collateral evidence indicates that Peter Paul was a stately, handsome, high-hearted man, healthy, but not robust; and that, so far from escaping hurt by his perilous devotion to his art, he began to fail manifestly a little over fifty, and succumbed to his foe by the time he was threescore.

As might be expected, Rubens gathered round him, in a very short time, as

though by magnetic influence, the cream of Flemish painters, and artists from foreign lands. To them he was an honourable and a munificent chief, being at once free from the irritability and jealousy of Titian, the austerity and moroseness of Michael Angelo, as well as the loftiness and solitariness of spirit which made Albrecht Dürer the man of a few devoted friends rather than of a crowd of intimate associates. It is to say no more of the presiding genius of Antwerp than that he was merely human, when we confess he had his enemies, and that the ways he took to defeat their schemes, though greatly lauded for their dignity and magnanimity, savour a little of the light scorn and the cool superiority of unbounded prosperity. Jansens and Broudel are conspicuous names included by common rumour in the party of his detractors, who, when they could find no other offence in his art or himself, accused him of growing famous on the joint efforts of his scholars. Jansens, who has left his own portrait, with long, wavy hair, a single tuft of beard, and drooping hand—the very likeness of a vain idle dreamer and dissipated spendthrift—is said to have challenged the redoubted Peter Paul to a fair trial of skill, single handed it is to be presumed. The answer of Peter Paul was, that he would engage with Jansens when he had proved himself worthy to be his competitor, but that in the meantime Jansens had better submit his works to the judgment of the public, as Peter Paul had done before him.

Broudel, an unsuccessful artist, declared the grapes were sour, and proposed to Peter Paul to relinquish his palette and pencils, and share with him his laboratory and his search for the philosopher's stone. The answer, given in Peter Paul's painting-room, with a comical flash of his warm brown eyes, was, that the offer was dated twenty-three years too late; "for so long it is," said he, "since I found the art of making gold with my palette and pencils."

When Cornelius Schut, an old pupil of Rubens, finding no market for his work because of the unapproachable popularity of the master, allowed himself to be provoked into feeling an implacable hatred towards Rubens, and slandered him grossly behind his back, the most illustrious man in Antwerp paid the bitter disappointed sinner an unexpected visit, praised, and offered to buy his pictures at his own price, and announced that if he—the master—ever had employment to bestow on another assistant, he would offer it to Schut.

And Peter Paul purchased all the finished pictures of Antony Vandyck, the very next day after the cavalier painter complained that the profits of his pictures would not maintain him—as a cavalier.

There can be no doubt that the frankness of Rubens' open door to artists, his readiness to inspect the performances of others, the freedom of his criticism, and yet the sweet-tempered wish to find something good in every picture, as well as the generosity of his aid, and the forbearance of his rebuke, were not without aggravation and gall to the other specimens of humanity—frail, mortified, and in a state of mental collapse.

Round Rubens in the first circle were the Flemish artists, who were his contemporaries rather than his scholars. With a few exceptions, they were honest and wise in owning their comrade's pre-eminence; and he was on excellent terms with them, for they worked together frequently. Velvet Breughel would paint his gorgeous flowers into Rubens' pastoral or con-

versation pieces, while Teniers, the son—a much younger man than the others, and a son-in-law of Breughel, but never or only for a very short time a scholar of Rubens'—would lend the figures of his boors, to be repaid by Rubens in kind. With his numerous and renowned assistants Peter Paul lived in great and glorious harmony; and it was impossible he could dispense with their services, the number and the size of his commissioned pictures (though it is to Rubens that we are indebted for the rise of cabinet pictures in family rooms) rendering it imperative that the master should not do more, unless in rare instances, than sketch the designs, put in the heads, and add the finishing touches. When one of the great altar-pieces, that of "St. Roch Healing the Sick," was begun and completed in a single week, it may easily be seen that some assistance was absolutely needed. It is a triumphant testimony to the credit which the assistants did their chief, and to the merit of the workmanship which they employed in his somewhat startling manufactory of pictures, that his few enemies started the cry against his reputation that Wildens painted his landscapes, Sneyders his animals, and Vandyck his men and women—an accusation so easily refuted by the mighty man who feared no work, for he would throw off in a trice four landscapes, two lion hunts, an odd historical scene or two—all incomparable in their respective lines—on which neither of the three smaller men had laid a finger.

Jacob Jordaens was perhaps the most constant member of Rubens' school, and one of the oldest and closest of his friends. He had studied, like Rubens, under the brutal Adam van Noort, and had married Van Noort's daughter. He came early into note, like his friend and master, as did others amongst those favourites of Peter Paul's, Antony Vandyck having been admitted into the Guild of St. Luke when he was a lad of barely nineteen; while, again, Jordaens attained the same distinction as a water-colour painter in his twenty-third year. Rude and coarse as Jordaens was, he was great in power and humour, and in the masterly handling of a certain golden glow of colour.

Franz Sneyders, again, was reckoned next to Rubens in animal painting, to which Peter Paul took at this time with lively zest. Besides, Sneyders was in fruit and vegetables what Velvet Breughel was in flowers.

Antony Vandyck—the cavalier painter, as men had dubbed him in Italy—was a young fellow, reared by women, foolishly loved and spoiled by women, and he lived to revenge upon them their folly, dying and leaving women his executors. He possessed, all along, a fatal womanishness, in the pride, discontent, extravagance, rashness, and fantastic romance of his character, and the delicate, soft beauty of his youthful face. He had a fine perception of human nature, a dignity, and a grace, with an intensity of feeling within his narrower limits, to which Peter Paul, in his unceremonious hurry, had no pretension.

There was many another satellite; and into the great cluster strayed, for a brief season, a strange wandering star, the canny Scotchman George Jameson, with a dark, keen, handsome, gipsy-like physiognomy. He had travelled in the train of Sir John Campbell of Glenorchy, and doubtless contrasted, with silent wonder and astonishment, the beer and the wine, the fat meadows,

with their beeves, and the drowsy canals, with their fish-ponds, the blossoming orchards, and the carved white cities of Brabant, with the "cauld kail," the sour milk, the barren heaths, the rushing streams, and the grey granite houses "Aberdeen-awa."

It was a goodly company to whom the magnificent house and its happy family circle were open and free. They were at liberty to stroll among the rare plants in the garden, and study the noble pictures in the Rotunda, and to maintain their different speculations and theories. They were a set of gallant, eager, clever men, who gave stir and gaiety again to the dull streets of Antwerp. No wonder Antwerp honours her painter, for in the hey-day of his life, the only honour and traffic that came to her were the princely cavalcades stopping at his door, and the negotiations, from far and near, for his pictures. The colony of artists were happy for the greater part, the one man sharpening the other, and putting him on his mettle; their very rivalries were frank, and their squabbles honest and short-lived, under the leadership of the kindly, high-bred, and good fellow, Peter Paul. Besides their common work, they worked for their own hands. Jordaens chuckled over his "Bean Feast," and caused Peter Paul to shout with laughter, at the farcical interludes in his version of the popular proverb—

"As the old have sung,
So pipe the young."

Franz Sneyders slaved at the "Stag Hunt," which made him famous. Antony toyed with the blue and white satin, which, with the scarlet and black satin, were alternately his favourite colours, and he sported his own fine dress and airs. His sentimental melancholy was nearly as much out of keeping as the boisterousness of the others. His "Crucifixion," in its sudden, mysterious gloom and the piteous grief of its watching women, is a great picture.

For topics of debate and whets for wit, the company proposed journeys to Italy, to various art shrines, or would condole with plain Jacob Jordaens over the infatuated early marriage, which so chained his feet and tied his hands, that he had to let slip the opportunity of shaking off or subduing his Flemish realism, fast wearing into vulgarity, by foreign travel. They slyly satirized and mocked at the absurd aspirations of Vandyck after nobility and luxury; or they made hopeless, feigned assaults on the impenetrable reserve and hard sagacity of George Jameson, who, after all, was as gently born as Peter Paul himself, and whose shrewd features were relieved by breadth of forehead, mellowness of eye, and ripe benevolence of mouth; and who formed a pleasant and marked exception to the conceited, greedy, poor, and proud, Dugald Dalgetties, whose mercenary ventures then constituted the general Flemish experience of Scotchmen. For a great sensation among the artists, there was the finding of what proved no mare's nest, but a treasure for future generations. This was the notion of cartoons of tapestry, which had been revived, like other art traditions; and Rubens, in a casual hunt through the repositories of the weavers, with gloating eyes lighted on the old priceless stripes of the cartoons of Raphael.

That society in Antwerp remains unique. There is not much, either in appearance or deed, in ancient or modern art to compare with that galaxy of which Peter Paul was the centre. It certainly did not want for solid flesh and blood, for muscular development, or for picturesque details—the flapping hats and waving feathers, the embroidered cloth, velvet, and point lace, the long boots and jangling spurs, were fair and fitting accompaniments for the faces.

Rubens was not idle himself, as the head and heart of his band of workers. The habits of indefatigable application he had at once adopted, have already been referred to. His happy marriage, and his establishment as the master of a school of painters, according to his project, had the most favourable influence on his invention and skill. To these early years of wedded life in Antwerp belong the middle and best period of his life as an artist, and the greatest of his paintings date from this time. Those Madonnas at Madrid which are freest from the offensive voluptuousness and the low tone of Rubens' women are one cluster of its fruit. The Virgin, as she stands on the globe, and trampling on the serpent as it writhes beneath her feet, a heavenly crown with the rays of glory just touching her head, and an unearthly and inspired soul in her eyes, is almost a miracle of art. There is another Madonna in the "Adoration of the Three Kings," in Madrid. Then, perhaps, too, that other Virgin and Serpent at Munich, in splendid allegory, from the twelfth chapter of Revelation, dates from the same time; and also the Virgin with the new-born Saviour in her arms, mounting on the wings of an eagle and surrounded by a flood of light. There is the serpent encircling the moon on which she stands, here also crushed under her flying but conquering footsteps. God the Father extends his sceptre over her, an archangel, clad in armour, in fearful combat with the seven-headed dragon, trying to devour the child. Though struck by lightning, the dragon is still striving to twine his tail around the legs of the angel, and to seize the cloak of the Virgin with one of his heads.

Now, too, were begun Rubens' Holy Families; and these are very attractive, although the Virgin was but a Flemish peasant; while his studies of children are free, sweet, and lovely, as the children whom Thackeray wrote of, and John Leech drew. The children playing with lambs, and with fruit and flowers—especially the seven children dragging along the huge cluster of fruit—with the fruit, ripe and luscious, by Sneyders, are truly exquisite.

At this time some of Peter Paul's most renowned portraits were also taken. Among them, that of himself and Isabella Brant, seated in a honeysuckle arbour, was painted soon after their marriage. In it, Rubens, though a man upwards of thirty, looks in his joyous power no older than the lad who started on his travels nigh ten years before, while she forms a beau ideal of plump, blooming womanhood. Then there is that other of the two at a wolf hunt, Rubens seated on a fine dapple grey, and Isabella on a brown horse, with a falcon on her wrist. There is also a charming picture of Isabella, with her infant son, the painter's first-born child, after four or five years of childless wedlock.

A still more famous picture of the era is that misnamed the "Four Philosophers," in reality, the portraits, in a group, of the scholars Justus Lipsius and Hugo Grotius, Rubens' brother Philip and Rubens' self. Of all Peter Paul's

hundred portraits, this picture is considered by judges second only to that of the "Straw Hat." The men, sage or fiery, with peaked beards and moustachios, characteristic and individual in their turned-over collars, ruffs, and fur-trimmed robes; the suggestive details of books and pens on the table; the hound at their feet; the classic bust on its pedestal at one side; the open pillared door, wreathed with sprays of foliage from without, framing the landscape beyond—all combine to form a picture which well deserves to rank, as indeed it has been ranked, next to Raphael's *Leo X.*

About this epoch, as has been already indicated, Rubens' great essays as an animal painter were commenced. Like many great men of similar temperament, he retained much of the boy in him to the last. Peter Paul had a passion for animals, and now, probably stimulated by the performances of his friend Sneyders, he began to turn it to account in painting his ravenous wild boars, grim wolves, and fierce tigers and panthers. These he represented generally in a state of conflict, at fight among themselves, or at bay in the last scenes of the hunts. So far did Rubens excel Sneyders in this, that Rubens' animals were said to be "living" and Sneyders' "dead." But, truth to say, he fell short of Rosa Bonheur and Landseer, in that he could not discriminate one tiger from another. He could no more have conceived and portrayed the spirit of the "Chief Mourner" at the shepherd's funeral, or of "The Patient very sorry for himself," whose wounded paw the expert keeper is dressing, than he could read what lay in men and women below what was skin deep, and apart from the corresponding pose of violently excited actors and actresses.

Soon after his return from Italy, Rubens painted his "*Daniel in the Lions' Den*," which is a grand and truthful representation of animals for once, and sets at rest the question of Paul's merits in this sphere. There are, besides, other examples, almost as well known, of this branch of his triumphs—"Samson slaying the Lion," for instance; or "*David strangling a Bear*," a dead lion and strangled ram completing the group. Another is that of *Romulus and Remus* suckled by the she-wolf. Then there is "*A Lion Hunt*," in which a lion has sprung on the hind-quarters of a grey horse, and is tearing down the rider, who is in desperate terror. The well-known "*Wolf Hunt*," mentioned before, may be likewise named; and another, of three mounted hunters attacking a hippopotamus and a crocodile. And I should not forget in my list his magnificent "*Tigress snarling at a Crocodile*."

It is said in connection with Peter Paul's painting of animals, and his fondness for them, that he seized every opportunity of becoming familiarly acquainted with their ways. Indeed, had the facility for procuring and conveying animals over the world been then equal to what it is now, the house at Antwerp, in addition to its gardens, might have shown such a menagerie as rumour has attributed to more than one eminent modern literary man. Even as it was, there is a story that Rubens had a lion brought to his house by its keeper (under what protest from Isabella Brant, women may divine); and that the big clever boy was so delighted when the great brute by chance condescended to yawn, that he suggested that the keeper should tickle it under the chin, to induce it to repeat the process; a liberty on the keeper's part

which the lion punished by bearing a grudge against the unfortunate man, and tearing him in pieces a few weeks afterwards.

It will be seen that Rubens had now attained pre-eminence in almost all the departments of his art; so great, indeed, that a contemporary, writing of one of his pictures, says that he excels in "women, children, a man in armour, a satyr, a tiger, and fruit and furies." His attainments in the first were very doubtful; and as for the last, he might have wanted them with great gain to his manhood.

But the work of Rubens' prime, which we have purposely left last, was his "*Descent from the Cross*,"—the glory of Antwerp, and the picture which has been designated by competent authority "the first for workmanship in the world," so widely applauded in his own day, that it was the description of its merits which induced Marie de Medici to summon the painter to Paris to adorn the Luxembourg with grand illustrations of her ingloriously conspicuous life.

The picture was originally promised, in the enthusiasm of Peter Paul's house-building, to the Company of the Arquebusiers of Antwerp, to propitiate them for a trespass committed on ground belonging to them, for which they threatened the painter with a troublesome lawsuit. The advice of his honest lawyer, and the strong common sense of Peter Paul, who would have as few quarrels on his hands as he could help, induced him to compromise the matter by an offer of a picture of their patron, St. Christopher, for his chapel. Rubens getting into the spirit of the work, in his free-handed way, wanted to exceed his word—to do not only the stereotyped legend of the Christ-bearer, but a grand illustration of the name. And, as a natural consequence, the stupid Arquebusiers, not able to comprehend his meaning, were disappointed instead of gratified by his liberal interpretation of the letter of his promise.

In fact Rubens painted the theme four times. First, the grand central scene of Christ's body borne by his disciples and followers; on the side of the left door, where, in the salutation of Elizabeth to Mary, Christ is under the breast of his mother; on the closed doors of the altar, where the veritable Christopher carries the Infant on his brawny shoulders; and on the reverse of the door, where old Simeon lifts high the heavenly Babe and prays—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." In the great central picture, the light, and the bold and striking effect, are concentrated on the single group, with its wonderful drawing and management of colouring, where the body of the Lord, in deathly heaviness, and too human ghastliness, is hanging in the arms of his friends, relieved by its white sheet, which none but Rubens would have ventured to use in such a case for a background. The heads of the Marys and the Magdalen are more finely finished, and have more feeling in them than Peter Paul had generally at his command: so much is this the case, indeed, as to have originated a tradition that these heads were accidentally injured in the course of the work, and were restored by Vandyck.

The life of Rubens was now almost a life to dream of by an artist. He had his schools, his great works, his rapidly growing fame and fortune, his fond, simple domestic happiness; but still this life was not without its taint of earthiness. Here, again, he was doomed to meet "the shadow feared by

man," which so often darkened his bright hearth, and fell cold, and with a warning shudder, over him, ere it wrapped him viewless in its folds, and dulled the murmur on his lips.

Peter Paul's sister, Blandina, died about this time, and so did his beloved brother Philip, leaving him the last of the short-lived family.

He wrote in honour of his elder brother the loving, scholarly, Latin epitaph: "To Philip Rubens, juriconsult, son of John, citizen and senator of Antwerp, the disciple and pupil of the great Lepsius, to whose learning having almost attained, he happily equalled his modesty, at Brussels under the President Richardst, at Rome under Ascanius, the Cardinal of Colonna. From his letters and studies, and from his secretaryship of the senate and people of Antwerp, *he departed, rather than died*, surviving in his reputation and writings, the 5th of the calends of September, 1619, in the thirty-ninth year of his age. Maria de Moy, mother of his two children, Clara and Philip, piously erected this sepulchral monument of her grief and love to her well-deserving husband, and to his mother Maria Pypilnck. Good stranger, lift up your hands in fervent prayer, and contemplate. He has gone before; shortly I must follow."

THE LOVE OF YEARS.

WINDY and grey the morning,
Lifeless and low the light,

A woman wandered by me,

And oh, her cheeks were white!

A man came out to meet her,

And never a word he said,

Till she laid her hands upon his breast,

And whispered, "He is dead."

They two looked at each other,

And the love and loss of years

Went over their faces like a cloud,

Breaking into tears.

I knew she had been watching

A sorrowful long night through,

And when her watch was over,

A sweet life was over too;

I knew he had been waiting

For a word which he felt before,

But faint hope came with her coming step,

Then went for evermore.

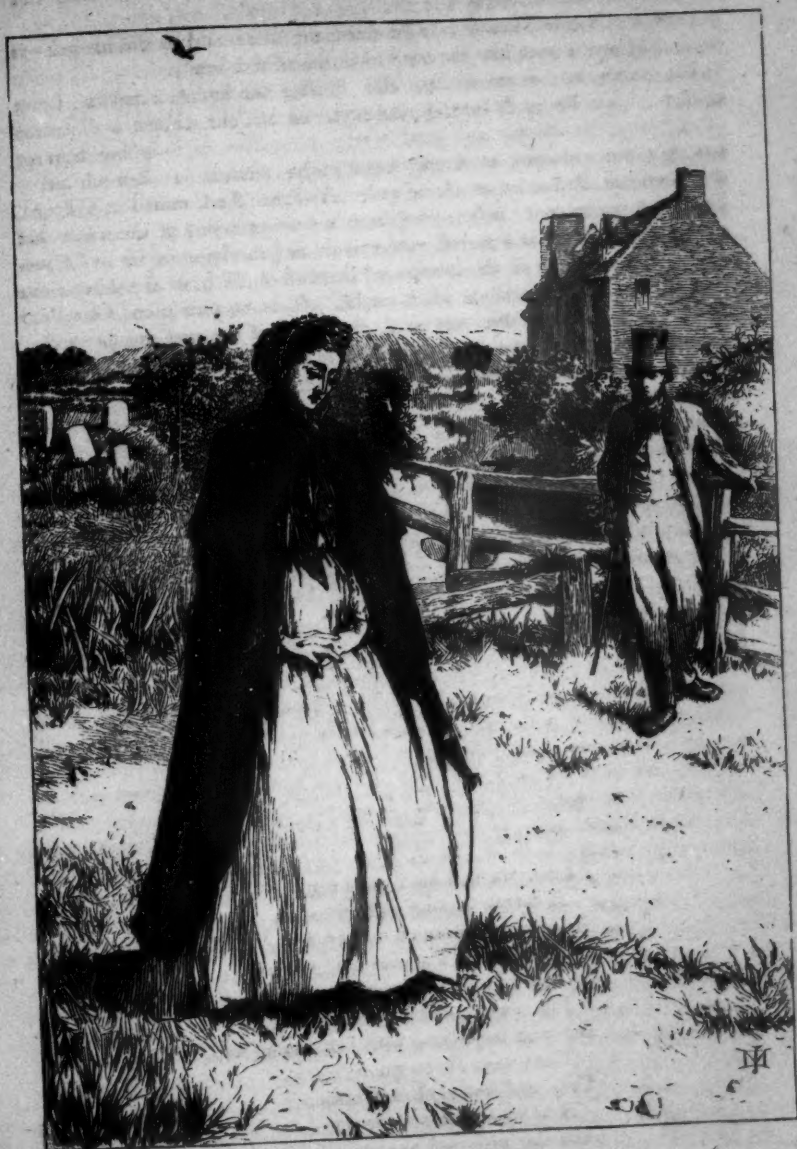
They two looked at each other,

And silently passed away,

And the misty sun went mournfully up

To make another day.

M. B. SMEDLEY.



"THE LOVE OF YEARS."

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the origin of life. It is shown that the problem is one of the most important and most difficult in the history of science. The author discusses the various theories of the origin of life, and shows that the most plausible is the theory of spontaneous generation. He then discusses the evidence for the theory of spontaneous generation, and shows that it is supported by the facts of the case. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the problem of the evolution of life. It is shown that the problem is one of the most important and most difficult in the history of science. The author discusses the various theories of the evolution of life, and shows that the most plausible is the theory of natural selection. He then discusses the evidence for the theory of natural selection, and shows that it is supported by the facts of the case. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the problem of the development of life. It is shown that the problem is one of the most important and most difficult in the history of science. The author discusses the various theories of the development of life, and shows that the most plausible is the theory of the development of life. He then discusses the evidence for the theory of the development of life, and shows that it is supported by the facts of the case.

POACHERS AND POACHING.

DURING the last few years much has been done through the medium of the press to explore the regions of vice, ignorance, weakness, and crime. Almost every social question has been discussed, and there are few aspects of civilization in its relation to the perishing and dangerous classes which have not been thoroughly overhauled and severely scrutinized. This modern tendency to anatomise the morbid conditions of moral life has not by any means met with universal favour. The explorations and exposures have been hesitatingly received by some, and openly frowned upon by others. Still the investigations have been continued, and the work of social reform has consequently progressed. When crime is so pictured as to conceal its inherent wrong, and when scenes and incidents of criminal life are dressed so attractively as to become lures of evil and incentives to wrong, the writer or speaker, whatever he may be, brings down upon himself the just condemnation of society. He who fosters wrong under the guise of exposing it, is justly execrated and condemned. But, on the other hand, the habit of either concealing or ignoring is a culpable stumbling-block in the path of social progress. We cannot strengthen the weak places of our social life until the weakness is pointed out, and in this free country, where public opinion is so great a factor in manners and government, it is indispensable that the public mind be informed of the evils to be grappled with before sufficient force can be concentrated upon them—sufficient force for their mitigation and destruction. Crime cannot be suppressed until it is understood, and the *nexus* of its continuity must be revealed before it can be broken.

Poachers and their doings occasionally occupy some share of public attention, and the mischief is brought into prominence by Parliamentary Debates on the Game Laws, or by deadly fights between poachers and gamekeepers. But in these instances the individual poacher escapes complete observation. The general public get a glimpse of the character in one or two of its phases, but they have no complete portrait.

The cost of poaching is a heavy item in criminal expenditure; these murderous assaults upon game watchers are terrible, and then there are strange poaching adventures in many an exciting romance. But who is at the bottom of all this? What is it all about, and what is the cause of it all?

What is a poacher? We speak not now of farmers' sons or other persons who may occasionally shoot a partridge or a hare without a certificate. Our attention must rather be directed to those who poach game merely and only with a view to selling it. One scarcely needs to say that those who kill other people's game for the sake of money are not to be found among the upper or respectable classes of society. We must go below these, below respectable tradesmen and shopkeepers, before we can fall in with the class of whom we are in quest. The only shopkeepers who can be said to have much to do with poaching are the licensed game-sellers. These do not poach themselves, but with some of them the poachers find a ready market for their game; nor can this encouragement to poaching ever be prevented

until the licensed game-sellers are required to keep a register of all the game they purchase—a register of the kind and quantity of game, together with the names and residences of the parties from whom the purchases were made. A registration of this kind, open to the inspection of the police, would be an effectual check to heavy poaching. The poachers proper are men who go out after game under unlawful circumstances and at unlawful hours. They belong to the mechanic and labouring classes almost exclusively. The railway “navvies” were formidable poachers in their day, and frequently turned out in such numbers that gamekeepers and watchers had no chance whatever either to arrest them or drive them off. It is so still with this class as far as they have opportunity. Wherever railways are being cut through game-preserving districts there is sure to be plenty of poaching. The utmost cruelty, even murder has been perpetrated by these railway plunderers of game-preserves. By these ruffians gamekeepers have often been abused, kicked, and cudgelled until they lay helpless and bleeding upon the ground, with the life all but beaten out of them. The only semblance of an excuse—which is really no excuse at all—for these “navvies” in their cruelty and blood-thirstiness, is their dread of being taken prisoners. But of their capture there has generally been no possibility owing to the largeness of their gangs. No! it was not to secure their own safety, but to inflict wanton and mortal injury that they turned back and clubbed out the helpless keepers’ brains with the butts of their guns.

“Navvies” are not now so prominent in poaching frays as they were in former years, because all the great railways are finished. The practice is only now carried on by drunken mechanics and thriftless common labourers. These are seldom so bold as the “navvies” used to be; but they are not a whit less bloodthirsty. The railway labourers frequently assembled in very large gangs and went out boldly poaching in open day, and set at defiance farmers and gamekeepers and everybody else. Your modern poacher has not courage to perform these bold exploits, but he partakes quite as much of the assassin and rather more of the thief. A very simple division is sufficient to classify the poachers of these days; they are either townsmen or countrymen. In most towns there are gangs of poachers who are in communication with their *confrères* in the country, and the chief portion of poaching is now carried on by men from towns and cities.

The social and moral character of poachers will not bear investigation. Stripped of the romance and false sentimentalism which has ridiculously accrued to their career, the life of a poacher is very dull, very stupid, and very miserable; and if the testimony of those poachers who have some little conscience left is to be credited, they are sometimes so desperately wretched that as they wander solitarily through the woods, gun in hand, it is a debatable point whether they shall shoot the pheasant, the gamekeeper, or themselves, so heavily does the burden of poverty, crime, degradation, and ruin press upon them and torment them. The majority of poachers are idle, immoral, and cruel. They want money without the trouble of earning it by honest labour, or to speak nearer the truth, they want more of drink, idleness, and debauchery than their ordinary earnings in an honest calling.

will ever enable them to afford. A few of them, of course, would take only game; but very many of them will steal anything. Nothing comes amiss to them, especially when they resolve—as is frequently the case—not to return home empty-handed. Farm and garden produce, implements of agriculture, and especially poultry, would frequently be found in the poachers' lair, if the police entered it with a search warrant. The worst feature in the poacher is his cruelty. Drive him into straits, and he shows himself cruel, bloodthirsty, and murderous. Most of them would—under circumstances of secrecy—rather kill their antagonist than be taken prisoner by him. This peculiarly cruel type of ruffianism marks the poacher far more than any other of the criminal classes. The regular thieves, whether burglars or garotters, have never—in proportion to numbers—shown a tithe of the cruelty which is exhibited by poachers, nor do the police, in the execution of their duty, suffer half so much maltreatment and cruelty as the gamekeepers. It is a fact that of all the criminal classes poachers are the most cruel, and the most wanton in their cruelty. How is this to be accounted for? Some say the Game Laws make the poacher what he is. But this is absurd. You might as well say that penal servitude is the cause of all garrotting, and that honest laws breed thieves. The Game Laws do not make the poacher cruel. He is inherently cruel; and if the Game Laws were entirely swept away in the next session of parliament, the poacher's rascality and bloodthirstiness would be all unchanged. You may change the laws; but before you put an end to this cruelty you must change the poacher from a dissolute ruffian to a sober and honest workman.

Why does the poacher become such? There are many causes which tend to make men poachers. The love of pleasures for which they cannot afford to pay, and to which they are therefore not entitled; fondness for night adventures and the excitements of danger; a restless and lazy unwillingness to submit to the common and honest drudgery of life, and a determination to get money rapidly and by any means, give men their first early tendency to a poacher's life. In some people the love of field sports is intense, and they make no effort to keep their *penchant* within legal limits. Others, again, are heavily oppressed by the Game Laws, and are aggravated to destroy the game which is literally destroying their crops. Farmers would not object to a moderate quantity of game, but to be eaten up by them is more than men can be expected to bear patiently. It must also be remembered that the casuistry of the Game Laws is the fertile theme of many disputes. Numbers are of opinion that the Game Laws are unjust, and that they perpetrate no moral wrong in violating them, especially when they can do so with impunity. Persons reared in this belief are not easily induced to change their opinion. There is more laxness of opinion about the obligation to observe the Game Laws than there is about the observance of any other law of this country, except perhaps the income-tax law. It is very easy to see how this general laxness of opinion, coupled with the causes already named, create and continue the criminal pursuits of the habitual poacher. But whatever love of adventure may induce a youngster to try his hand with net and gun, no man becomes an habitual poacher from any mere love of sport, or from any unsound opinions as to his obligation to obey the Game Laws. The habitual poacher is an idle

vagabond, and one can call him nothing else. By plundering game preserves he fills his pockets with dishonest money, and neglects his own honest calling in the walks of honourable industry. What sport or what manliness can there be in sweeping off some twenty or thirty hares when the night is so dark that the poacher cannot see his snares, and is obliged to stumble and grope his way to the netted game? There may be an inclination to maim and murder, but there can be no true and heroic love of honourable adventure in the cowardly assassins who would shoot down a gamekeeper and then deliberately beat his brains^o out, rather than allow themselves to be taken in fair and manly fight as between man and man. Poachers are always drunkards; and it is only for the sake of drink and indolence that they give themselves wholly to the unlawful pursuit of game. Let the truth be spoken. Poachers, as a class, are not honest men; they are not sober men; they are not industrious men; they are bad husbands, bad fathers, and bad neighbours; they like the haunts of vice better than their own fireside; they can lay no just claim to the possession of common morality; and if it were not for the attractions of strong drinks and the love of laziness, there would be no poaching in the sense in which the subject is being considered in this paper. Anti-Game Law rhetoricians and poets—and we are neither advocating nor abusing the Game Laws—represent the poacher as some neglected, helpless, persecuted, and starving wretch, who is obliged to kill the squire's game before he can break his fast; or else they picture him as snaring a hare to make some savoury soup for a sick and dying wife. These pictures are altogether untrue. The man is starving because he can work and won't; he is out of work because he has thrown himself out of work by such irregularities as the richest master cannot afford to tolerate; and if his wife is ill and his children are in rags, who has brought them to such a pass? Why, the poacher spends in drink what ought to support his family, and prefers skulking about in idleness to the resumption of the restraints and dignity of honest toil. Besides, if his wife is really dying, she wants something rather more digestible than roast pheasant and jugged hare. In these days of benevolence and scantily-supplied labour markets, no capable and well-conducted man need lose a month's work, and go drinking for a fortnight, and then get himself locked up in prison. This is no way in which to procure nourishment and comfort for the sick. Much as the squire hates poaching, he would not allow even the poacher's family to pine away in unrelieved sickness and starvation. Besides, what are the Poor Laws for? Are they not to help the helpless, and to keep the hungry from temptations to dishonesty?

Poachers, then, are men of bad character. They are indolent, cruel, and worse. They want money without work, food which they have not earned, and luxuries to be paid for by stolen game. If the poacher could obtain no money for his game, he would soon bid farewell to his dogs and snares and nets and guns. The keepers would be unmolested on their watch, and the poacher would either take to unmistakable stealing, or else turn his hand to honest labour; not because he liked it, but because he must either do it or starve.

What does the poacher do? He begins by getting acquainted with some es-

established poachers, and the acquaintance is generally formed in the beer-house. There, seated by the fireside, in a halo of tobacco smoke, the old poachers spin their yarn of game plundering, fighting their way through the night watchers, and getting off scot free. The young man's passions kindle as he listens to the exciting tales of the poachers, and he bravely determines to join the gang. But if he knew all, or could foresee half the miserable degradation towards which he has begun to travel, he would come to a very different determination. He has not heard half the story, and is blind to the sober facts which have been made, in his hearing, the text of so much plausible romancing. He has seen the fun and the excitement; but the heroes of his intoxicated imagination have not shown him the wounds and bruises, the hunger, the poverty, the disgrace, and the imprisonments which the poacher brings upon himself. Those beer-house tales are tawdry fictions mixed with the merest modicum of fact. They draw bragging pictures, and bag more game over their beer than they ever did in the fields, and all the while the youngster is noviciating his tutors are deceitful and treacherous to one another. There is scarcely one who would not betray his "chum" to any gamekeeper or policeman who would bid high enough, and give the pledge of secrecy. They often defraud one another as to the fruits of their plunder, and sometimes send each other to prison for spite. The dark side of the picture is studiously kept out of sight; and as everything appears enchanting to the youth already half intoxicated, he determines to become a hero, joins the gang, and begins his miserable initiation into the beggaring art of poaching.

The poacher's implements are neither very complicated nor very costly. He needs a gun short in the barrel and light in the stock, so that he may "take her to pieces in a crack," hide her in his big pockets, and pass the watcher without suspicion. It is a wonder that more poachers are not shot with their own guns, for the barrels, detached from the stock, are frequently loaded, with caps on the nipples. With these loaded barrels in his pocket, the poacher jumps a fence or hides in a ditch. The slightest rap on those capped nipples would send him into the world where there is no poaching. He likes to have his gun ready charged in his pocket, that he may be always ready to maim a keeper or shoot a hare. Guns are little used by poachers except for pheasant shooting, or to take a chance shot at a stray hare when he is not out for a regular night's maraud.

Clever things some of the old hands can do in decoying hares. It is literally true that some old poachers can imitate the hare's voice so well as to call her comrade within gunshot. A friend of the writer's says:—"One poacher I knew, who could so perfectly imitate the call of a hare, that if there were any within hearing, he would speedily bring them within range of his gun. He was very successful in taking hares, but he was very often taken himself. He owned that he could scarcely ever keep the pig he had fattened for his family, being always obliged to sell it to pay his increasingly heavy fines." All that this fellow's skill in poaching did for him was to rob his famished family of their own pork and bacon.

As for the skill of the poachers in shooting, they are neither better nor worse marksmen than other folks. We have seen an old poacher, considered

a crack shot, beaten by an honest bricklayer, to his intense astonishment and disgust.

The poacher's craft requires a large quantity of wire for snaring hares and pheasants. They become very skilful in the use of these snares, and seldom go without one in their pockets. Snares are simply pieces of wire pegged or tied to a bush by one end, and noosed at the other, the noose end being carefully placed in the run through the hedge. The game passing through the run gets its head into the loop, and so strangles itself. There is always great danger for the poacher with snares, and so he is very wary in taking them up. The keepers may have seen the snares, and determined to watch for their owners. So when the poacher comes on the ground, he dreads a keeper lurking in every hiding-place, and fears to be pounced upon from the bottom of a ditch or from behind a tree. It is of no use for the poacher to plead that he did not set the snare, but merely found it by accident. The question with the keeper is, not who sets it but who takes it up. Innocent people know this, and if they see a snared hare in the hedgerow, they take care to pass her by and leave her there.] Sometimes when the poacher goes to take up his snares he becomes aware of the keeper's presence, and skulks away. He does not always see the keeper, however. A poacher once set some snares in a very exposed and open place, where it was impossible for the keeper to hide. After looking up and down the hedgerows the poacher went to his snares, took them up, and got nicely snared himself. The keeper had climbed into a very high tree, towards the branches of which the poacher never cast a glance until it was too late.

The poachers' nets are mostly made of shoemaker's hemp, and such as are meant for cover sides are not unfrequently of enormous length. Small nets are used for gateways, and purse nets for securing live game.

The poacher's dog is an interesting animal, and is always well trained for his work. A dog between a bull dog and a greyhound, or between a greyhound or a terrier, makes the best "lurcher" or poacher's dog. You may generally know a poacher's dog when you see him. He looks very sleepy in the daytime, and seems stupid for want of a good night's rest. Moreover, he seems slyer and subtler than other dogs. There is too much of the Jesuit about him to enable him to pass for an honest dog, and he sulkily does the bidding of his master with the air of one who must either do it or die. He is seldom in good spirits, and when on some rare occasion he wags his tail, he does it as if he were ashamed of himself. Poachers' dogs are employed, not for catching game, but for running it into the nets. They are taught to scour a field in the darkest nights, and work all the hares and rabbits towards the nets in the gateway, or on the cover sides. Sometimes they are put to watch their master's net, and will fly at any one who attempts to interfere with it. They never give mouth under any circumstances, being too well trained to fall into that error. A Shropshire farmer once told us some rather good stories about a poacher's dog. He had been trained to run away from his master when called to approach him, and never to give mouth under any circumstances. Once upon a time this same poacher was brought before the magistrates, and the keepers tried to identify him by his dog. The animal was brought into

court as the supposed property of the poacher. This he stoutly denied. He was told to call the dog to him, which he did, and immediately the terrified dog scampered out of the court. He had received too many beatings to come to his master when asked to do so. This same dog once got his owner into great trouble. He was set to watch a gate net, and for a long time the canine sentinel faithfully performed his duty. During the moonlight night a bull, attracted by the net, came up, and got his horns into it. The dog, considering it a part of his duty to interfere, pinned the bull by the nose, which caused a very loud uproar, and the keepers heard it, and they came, and they took the nets, and were very near taking the dog also; but the poacher warily kept himself out of sight, thinking it better to lose his nets than go to prison. The owner of this queer dog was a very queer man—quite a character. He knew all the preserves and likely gateways for miles round. Give him fifty yards start, and no keeper could catch him, for he was very swift of foot. When in danger of being surrounded he would, if he had the chance, lie for hours up to the chin in water, concealing himself among the rushes, while the watchers were storming around, and wondering, in the name of everything under the harvest moon, how the fellow had managed to escape them yet again. Once everything had been arranged between himself and his companions for a night's poaching. During the day he "fell out" with his gang, and would neither allow them to go with him nor tell them where he was going. So they served him out—tied the dog to a stone at the bottom of a deep ditch not far from his master's house. When the time for starting arrived, the dog was nowhere to be found. The poacher called and raged in vain. The dog could not get loose, and he had received too many "wallopings" for whining and barking ever to give mouth again. The master called till he was tired, but the dog'durst make no sound to let him know that he was fast, and so the poacher's night was lost amid the jeers of his offended companions.

A gang of poachers will never go to a strange and untried place without a guide, and frequently they all know the chosen ground well, and some of them may have poached it for many years. The town poachers travel long distances by rail, having previously selected their ground, either by sending a scout, or by communicating with some village poacher—town and country poachers generally know each other, and often work together. Dark, windy nights suit them best, and a moonlight night must be very cloudy before they will venture out. To beguile the night watchers guns are sometimes fired in one part of the preserves while the main gang are distant and busy elsewhere. Having run their nets along the cover side, the dogs are sent out to drive in the game. A poacher generally stands at each end of the net with his hand on the top string, and when it jerks he knows that game is struggling in the net. Then he passes along the line of netting and kills everything he finds; but if the game had only the sense to turn back he would take nothing for his pains. What a pity it is that keepers cannot train their game to draw back, and to do it in the nick of time. As many as twenty or thirty hares will sometimes be caught at one haul. When the keepers come suddenly upon them the poachers generally show fight, and many a watcher has been

heavily beaten to pay off an old grudge. Keepers find it best to treat poachers kindly and fairly, for if used otherwise they will take a deadly revenge, however long they may have to wait for their opportunity.

The poachers have many hair-breadth escapes, and often, by hiding in water for hours on a bitter cold night, get a rheumatism that clings to them through life. A single furze bush or a deep drain is frequently the only barrier between a poacher and a prison. When driven into close quarters they fight hard and savagely. This is the worst part of their character. When once their evil nature is thoroughly roused—and a little will rouse them—they care nothing for broken limbs and fractured skulls, and every man who tries to catch a poacher does it at the imminent risk of his life. The fight, however, is not all tragedy: it is sometimes comedy of the most ludicrous description. Several keepers once fell in with a gang of poachers upon one of Lord Bradford's estates. They had no dogs, but were driving the game by sweeping the field with very long ropes drawn along the ground. There was some fighting, but most of the poachers ran, and left their nets when the keepers came upon them. In the eagerness of the pursuit, one of the keepers got separated from his companions; but although the night was very dark he managed to keep up with his man. They closed, struggled, and fell into a dry ditch together, the poacher being undermost, and on his back. Just at that moment the moon came out from behind a cloud, and its beams fell upon the poacher's up-turned face, when the light revealed to the keeper a horrible sight. Glaring eyes, white teeth, and an awfully black face. Never was seen in those parts a poacher's face like that before. Had he got into the fiendish clutches of some infernal spirit, now glaring upon him through those fiery eyes? No! It was only an earthly chimney-sweep.

There is one peculiar kind of poaching which is only done in the daytime. Some gentlemen are in the habit of buying large quantities of live pheasants to turn into their woods for the first of October. This bad habit dazzles the gentleman's visitors by the glittering show of abundant game, but the show is made at the expense of honest preserving, and at the cost of something worse. Most of this live pheasant business is carried on by expert local poachers, encouraged by dealers in London. The local experts set snares of fine wire in the pheasant runs, and then walk about the wood to put the pheasants on the move. They run into the snares, and there is a small knot on the wire loop to prevent its drawing up so tightly as to hang the pheasant. When caught, the pheasants are sold alive, either to some local sportsman, or to the keepers of the City emporiums for live game. This system of buying live game, to stock exhausted or extemporised preserves, gives great encouragement to poaching. It is neither good in the interests of manly sport, nor yet for the country, neither does it help the reformation of the poacher. Fancy his being brought before the magisterial bench for poaching live game. One of the magistrates asks him, "How did you dispose of them?" and then the answer, "I sold some of them to the man who is your gardener and keeper, sir!"

Partridges, as everybody knows, are caught by dragging nets over them in the darkness of night, and sometimes they are caught in severe wintry

weather by springs or snares, set by the troughs where cattle are fed in the fields—which everybody *doesn't* know. Before now, and to save the labour of net-dragging the whole field, pointers have been trained to work the ground with small lanterns tied to their necks. When they stand to point, the poacher, in the darkest night, is guided by the light to the right spot, and spreads his net over the game at once.

Of all the means employed to capture poachers, torches are dreaded by them the most. These, blazing suddenly round the gang, enable the keepers to identify them, and poachers will seldom show fight when suddenly surrounded by these tell-tale and face-marking night-lights.

What comes of it all? Why, simply this: the game must be disposed of, and so must the poachers. It is not for food, nor for sport, but for money that the game is stolen. Most of it is sold, at a low price, to the licensed game-dealers, and but for them, there would be considerably less poaching. Occasionally a member of the gang will himself take out a license, either to kill game, or to sell it, but this is not often done. A considerable quantity of poached game is sold to public-houses and hotel-keepers; but this kind of sale is so limited, and so uncertain, that no gang of poachers could subsist upon such chance sales. Stop the game dealers from purchasing poached game, and poaching will soon be reduced to very narrow limits; but until this is done, poaching gangs will continue to exist, because they know they can obtain money for their plunder at any time.

The reader will by this time be able to form his own opinion as to the ultimate lot of the poacher. He soon becomes a lazy drunken vagabond, whom nobody will employ, and the longer he follows his hazardous and guilty pursuit the worse he grows. During the game season he will scarcely strike one stroke of honest work. When not in prison he lies in bed the greater part of the day, and, if sober enough, goes out to plunder in the night. His wife and family are ill-housed, ill-clad, and ill-fed. They live in constant terror, and never know when some accident may befall the head of the family, or how soon he may be sent to prison. The poacher's family are far worse off, and far more unhappy than the family of the poorest workman who earns his livelihood honestly. The money which the poacher earns never does him any good. "Ill got, ill gone," explains all; he is kept poor by his drunken habits, by heavy fines, and by long runs of what he calls "bad luck." The nights are light and still, the keepers are all on the alert, and he has no chance. Often he loses his nets, and cannot raise money to buy more. Then come the imprisonments, sharp, long, and frequent; and while he undergoes his sentence his goods are sold, and his starving wife and family are thrown upon the parish. Poaching is always a losing game, and never fails to bring its votary to disgrace, poverty, and ruin. He goes on snaring game until at last "the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." He may sing about the "Poachers of Rufford Park," and the "Lads of Thorney Moor," but his sham and spasmodic jollity only half hides an aching heart.

"We popp'd her into the bag, my boys,
And through the woods did steer;
Oh! it's my delight of a shiny night,
At the season of the year."

But the "shiny nights" are few for him, and of short duration, and when locked up in prison, he has neither heart nor means to sing,

"Health to every gentleman
That wants to buy a hare."

After a few imprisonments, the poacher's character is entirely gone. Scarcely any one will give him employment, and he must either leave the district, or earn his bread in the most precarious and miserable manner. Baron Martin once said that he knew a case in which an old poacher had eaten twenty-three Christmas dinners in prison. We can well believe it, and can have no difficulty in imagining the amount of domestic misery and degradation implied in those twenty-three imprisonments.

It is high time to do away with the false sympathy and romance which has fostered so much evil, and brought so much misery upon the poacher. Farmers will not free themselves from the sometimes oppressive use of the Game Laws under which they suffer, by conniving at the doings of ruffianly gangs. The same men who kill the landlord's pheasants will generally steal the tenant's hens. The New Act, empowering the police to interfere, has done much to diminish the amount of poaching, and it will still do more. The Game Laws need amendment, but let them be reformed on the merits of the case, and not by false sympathy with the ruffian, who would rather murder a gamekeeper than earn honest bread for himself by a hard day's work. Let us have no more such songs as,

"Drink a health, both young and old,
To every gallant poacher bold."

In the poacher there is nothing courageous, nothing heroic, and nothing brave. Is there anything courageous in the man who turns his lazy back on honest labour in the struggle of life, and who would rather live by sneaking plunder than by "providing things honest in the sight of all men?" Is there anything brave in starving a family, and in madly persisting in a crime which must lead to unnecessary and utter destruction? Is there anything heroic in injuring and maiming for life keepers and watchers, while peacefully engaged in performing their lawful duties? The poacher's boldness is only vulgar impudence, his bravery is a dastardly refusal to face life's honest struggles, and his heroism is an uninstructed and licentious disregard of common rectitude. Abuse the Game Laws if you like, but don't canonize a scamp, and don't represent a class of men who are frequently murderers at heart as martyrs to unjust and oppressive laws. Surely we are not to reserve all our sympathy for an imprisoned vagabond, and to feel no pity for the keeper's widow and her children, who weep over their honest and murdered father's grave.

H. W. HOLLAND.



GRIFFITH GAUNT.

BY CHARLES READE.

CHAPTER XLI.

"**B**E seated, mistress, if you please," said Mrs. Gaunt, with icy civility; "and let me know to what I owe this extraordinary visit."

"I thank you, dame," said Mercy, "for indeed I am sore fatigued." She sat quietly down. "Why I have come to you? It was to serve you, and to keep my word with George Neville."

"Will you be kind enough to explain?" said Mrs. Gaunt, in a freezing tone, and with a look of her great grey eye to match.

Mercy felt chilled, and was too frank to disguise it. "Alas," said she; softly, "'tis hard to be received so, and me come all the way from Lancashire, with a heart like lead, to do my duty, God willing."

The tears stood in her eyes, and her mellow voice was sweet and patient.

The gentle remonstrance was not quite without effect. Mrs. Gaunt coloured a little: she said, stiffly, "Excuse me if I seem discourteous; but you and I ought not to be in one room a moment. You do not see this, apparently. But at least I have a right to insist that such an interview shall be very brief, and to the purpose. Oblige me, then, by telling me in plain terms why you have come hither."

"Madam, to be your witness at the trial."

"You to be my witness?"

"Why not? If I can clear you? What! would you rather be condemned for murder, than let me show them you are innocent? Alas, how you hate me."

"Hate you, child?" said Mrs. Gaunt, colouring to her temples; "of course I hate you. We are both of us flesh and blood, and hate one another. And one of us is honest enough, and uncivil enough, to say so."

"Speak for yourself, dame," replied Mercy, quietly, "for I hate you not; and I thank God for it. To hate is to be miserable. I'd liefer be hated than to hate."

Mrs. Gaunt looked at her. "Your words are goodly and wise, said she; "your face is honest, and your eyes are like a very dove's. But, for all that, you hate me quietly, with all your heart. Human nature is human nature."

"'Tis so. But grace is grace." Mercy was silent a moment, then resumed, "I'll not deny I did hate you for a time, when first I learned the man I had married had a wife, and you were she. We that be women are too unjust to each other, and too indulgent to a man. But I have worn out my hate. I wrestled in prayer, and the God of Love he did quench my most unreasonable hate. For 'twas the man betrayed me. You never wronged me, nor I you. But you are right, madam; 'tis true that nature

without grace is black as pitch. The devil he was busy at my ear, and whispered me, 'If the fools in Cumberland hang her, what fault o' thine? Thou wilt be his lawful wife, and thy poor innocent child will be a child of shame no more.' But, by God's grace, I did defy him. And I do defy him." She rose swiftly from her chair, and her dove's eyes gleamed with celestial light. "Get thee behind me, Satan. I tell thee the hangman shall never have her innocent body, nor thou my soul."

The movement was so unexpected, the words and the look so simply noble, that Mrs. Gaunt rose too, and gazed upon her visitor with astonishment and respect: yet still with a dash of doubt.

She thought to herself, "If this creature is not sincere, what a mistress of deceit she must be!"

But Mercy Vint soon returned to her quiet self. She sat down, and said, gravely, and, for the first time, a little coldly, as one who had deserved well, and been received ill—"Mistress Gaunt, you are accused of murdering your husband. 'Tis false, for two days ago I saw him alive."

"What do you say?" cried Mrs. Gaunt, trembling all over.

"Be brave, madam; you have borne great trouble: do not give way under joy. He who has wronged us both—he who wedded you under his own name of Griffith Gaunt, and me under the false name of Thomas Leicester—is no more dead than we are; I saw him two days ago, and spoke to him, and persuaded him to come to Carlisle town, and do you justice."

Mrs. Gaunt fell on her knees. "He is alive: He is alive. Thank God! Oh, thank God! He is alive: and God bless the tongue that tells me so. God bless you eternally, Mercy Vint."

The tears of joy streamed down her face, and then Mercy's flowed too. She uttered a little pathetic cry of joy. "Ah," she sobbed, "the bit of comfort I needed so, has come to my heavy heart. *She* has blessed me."

But she said this very softly, and Mrs. Gaunt was in a rapture, and did not hear her.

"Is it a dream? my husband alive? and you the one to come and tell me so? How unjust I have been to you! Forgive me! Why does he not come himself?"

Mercy coloured at this question, and hesitated.

"Well, dame," said she, "for one thing, he has been on the fuddle for the last two months."

"On the fuddle?"

"Ay; he owns he has never been sober a whole day. And that takes the heart out of a man, as well as the brains. And then he has got it into his head that you will never forgive him; and that he shall be cast in prison if he shows his face in Cumberland."

"Why in Cumberland more than in Lancashire?" asked Mrs. Gaunt, biting her lip.

Mercy blushed faintly: she replied with some delicacy, but did not altogether mince the matter.

"He knows I shall never punish him for what he has done to me."

"Why not? I begin to think he has wronged you almost as much as he has me."

"Worse, madam; worse. He has robbed me of my good name. You are still his lawful wife, and none can point the finger at you. But, look at me: I was an honest girl; respected by all the parish. What has he made of me? The man that lay a dying in my house, and I saved his life, and so my heart did warm to him, he blasphemed God's altar, to deceive and betray me; and here I am, a poor forlorn creature, neither maid, wife, nor widow; with a child on my arms that I do nothing but cry over; ay, my poor innocent, I left thee down below, because I was ashamed she should see thee; ah me! ah me!" She lifted up her voice, and wept.

Mrs. Gaunt looked at her wistfully; and, like Mercy before her, had a bitter struggle with human nature; a struggle so sharp that, in the midst of it, she burst out crying with strange violence: but, with that burst, her great soul conquered.

She darted out of the room, leaving Mercy astonished at her abrupt departure.

Mercy was patiently drying her eyes, when the door opened, and judge her surprise when she saw Mrs. Gaunt glide into the room with her little boy asleep in her arms, and an expression upon her face more sublime than anything Mercy Vint had ever yet seen on earth. She kissed the babe softly, and, becoming infantine as well as angelic by this contact, sat herself down in a moment on the floor with him, and held out her hand to Mercy. "There," said she, "come sit beside us; and see how I hate him; no more than you do; sweet innocent."

They looked him all over, discussed his every feature learnedly, kissed his limbs and extremities after the manner of their sex, and comprehending at last that to have been both of them wronged by one man was a bond of sympathy, not hate, the two wives of Griffith Gaunt laid his child across their two laps, and wept over him together.

Mercy Vint took herself to task. "I am but a selfish woman," said she, "to talk, or think of anything but that I came here for." She then proceeded to show Mrs. Gaunt by what means she proposed to secure her acquittal, without getting Griffith Gaunt into trouble.

Mrs. Gaunt listened with keen and grateful attention, until she came to that part: then she interrupted her eagerly.

"Don't spare him for me. In your place I'd trounce the villain finely."

"Ay," said Mercy, "and then forgive him. But I am different. I shall never forgive him; but I am a poor hand at punishing and revenging. I always was. My name is Mercy, you know. To tell the truth, I was to have been called Prudence, after my good aunt; but she said, nay: she had lived to hear Greed, and Selfishness, and a heap of faults, named Prudence. 'Call the child something that means what it does mean, and not after me,' quoth she. So with me hearing 'Mercy, Mercy,' called out after me so many years, I do think the quality hath somehow got under my skin; for I

cannot abide to see folk smart, let alone to strike the blow. What, shall I take the place of God, and punish the evil-doers, because 'tis me they wrong? Nay, dame, I will never punish him, though he hath wronged me cruelly: all I shall do is to think very ill of him, and shun him, and tear his memory out of my heart. You look at me; do you think I cannot? You don't know me. I am very resolute when I see clear. Of course I loved him: loved him dearly. He was like a husband to me, and a kind one. But the moment I knew how basely he had deceived us both, my heart began to turn against the man, and now 'tis ice to him. Heaven knows what I am made of; for, believe me, I'd liefer ten times be beside you than beside him. My heart it lay like a lump of lead till I heard your story, and found I could do you a good turn; you that he had wronged, as well as me. I read your beautiful eyes; but nay, fear me not; I'm not the woman to pine for the fruit that is my neighbour's. All I ask for on earth is a few kind words and looks from you. You are gentle and I am simple; but we are both one flesh and blood, and your lovely wet eyes do prove it this moment. Dame Gaunt—Kate—I ne'er was ten miles from home afore, and I am come all this weary way to serve thee. Oh, give me the one thing that can do me good in this world, the one thing I pine for—a little of *your* love."

The words were scare out of her lips when Mrs. Gaunt caught her impetuously round the neck with both hands, and laid her on that erring but noble heart of hers, and kissed her eagerly.

They kissed one another again and again, and wept over one another.

And now Mrs. Gaunt, who did nothing by halves, could not make enough of Mercy Vint. She ordered supper and ate with her, to make her eat. Mrs. Menteith offered Mercy a bed; but Mrs. Gaunt said she must lie with her, she and her child.

"What," said she, "think you I'll let you out of my sight? Alas, who knows when you and I shall ever be together again?"

"I know," said Mercy, thoughtfully. "In this world, never."

They slept in one bed, and held each other by the hand all night, and talked to one another, and in the morning knew each the other's story, and each the other's mind and character, better than their oldest acquaintances knew either the one or the other.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE trial began again: and the court was crowded to suffocation. All eyes were bent on the prisoner. She rose, calm and quiet, and begged leave to say a few words to the court.

Mr. Whitworth objected to that. She had concluded her address yesterday, and called a witness.

Prisoner. But I have not examined a witness yet.

The Judge. You come somewhat out of time, madam; but, if you will be brief, we will hear you.

Prisoner. I thank you, my lord. It was but to withdraw an error. The cry for help that was heard by the side of Hernshaw Mere, I said, yesterday,

that cry was uttered by Thomas Leicester. Well, I find I was mistaken; the cry for help was uttered by my husband, by that Griffith Gaunt I am accused of assassinating.

This extraordinary admission caused a great sensation in court. The judge looked very grave and sad; and Serjeant Wiltshire, who came into court just then, whispered his junior, "She has put the rope round her own neck. The jury would never have believed our witness."

The Prisoner. I will only add that a person came into the town last night, who knows a great deal more about this mysterious business than I do. I purpose, therefore, to alter the plan of my defence; and to save your time, my lord, who have dealt so courteously with me, I shall call but a single witness.

Ere the astonishment caused by this sudden collapse of the defence was in any degree abated, she called "Mercy Vint."

There was the usual stir and struggle; and then the calm self-possessed face and figure of a comely young woman confronted the court. She was sworn; and examined by the prisoner after this fashion.

"Where do you live?"

"At the 'Packhorse,' near Allerton, in Lancashire."

Prisoner. Do you know Mr. Griffith Gaunt?

Mercy. Madam, I do.

Prisoner. Was he at your place in October last?

Mercy. Yes, madam, on the thirteenth of October. On that day he left for Cumberland.

Prisoner. On foot, or on horseback?

Mercy. On horseback.

Prisoner. With boots on, or shoes?

Mercy. He had a pair of new boots on.

Prisoner. Do you know Thomas Leicester?

Mercy. A pedlar called at our house on the eleventh of October, and he said his name was Thomas Leicester.

Prisoner. How was he shod?

Mercy. In hobnailed shoes.

Prisoner. Which way went he on leaving you?

Mercy. Madam, he went northwards; I know no more for certain.

Prisoner. When did you see Mr. Gaunt last?

Mercy. Four days ago.

The Judge. What is that? you saw him alive four days ago?

Mercy. Ay, my lord; the last Wednesday that ever was.

At this the people burst out into a loud agitated murmur, and their heads went to and fro all the time. In vain the crier cried and threatened. The noise rose and surged, and took its course. It went down gradually, as amazement gave way to curiosity; and then there was a remarkable silence; and then the silvery voice of the prisoner, and the mellow tones of the witness, appeared to penetrate the very walls of the building, each syllable of those two beautiful speakers was heard so distinctly.

Prisoner. Be so good as to tell the court what passed on Wednesday last between Griffith Gaunt and you, relative to this charge of murder.

Mercy. I let him know one George Neville had come from Cumberland in search of him, and had told me you lay in Carlisle Gaol charged with his murder. I did urge him to ride at once to Carlisle, and show himself; but he refused. He made light of the matter. Then I told him not so; the circumstances looked ugly, and your life was in peril. Then he said, nay, 'twas in no peril, for if you were to be found guilty, then he would show himself on the instant. Then I told him he was not worthy the name of a man; and if he would not go, I would. "Go you, by all means," said he, "and I'll give you a writing that will clear her. Jack Houseman will be there, that knows my hand; and so does the sheriff, and half the grand jury at the least."

Prisoner. Have you that writing?

Mercy. To be sure I have. Here 'tis.

Prisoner. Be pleased to read it.

The Judge. Stay a minute. Shall you prove it to be his handwriting?

Prisoner. Ay, my lord, by as many as you please.

The Judge. Then let that stand over for the present. Let me see it.

It was handed up to him; and he showed it to the sheriff, who said he thought it was Griffith Gaunt's writing.

The paper was then read out to the jury. It ran as follows:—

"Know all men, that I, Griffith Gaunt, Esq., of Bolton Hall and Hernshaw Castle, in the county of Cumberland, am alive and well; and the matter which has so puzzled the good folk in Cumberland befell as follows:—I left Hernshaw Castle in the dead of night upon the fifteenth of October. Why, is no man's business but mine. I found the stable locked; so I left my horse, and went on foot. I crossed Hernshaw Mere by the bridge, and had got about a hundred yards, as I suppose, on the way, when I heard some one fall with a great splash into the mere, and soon after cry dolefully for help. I, that am no swimmer, ran instantly to the north side to a clump of trees, where a boat used always to be kept. But the boat was not there. Then I cried lustily for help, and, as no one came, I fired my pistol and cried murder! For I had heard men will come sooner to that cry than to any other. But in truth, I was almost out of my wits, that a fellow-creature should perish miserably so near me. Whilst I ran wildly to and fro, some came out of the Castle bearing torches. By this time I was at the bridge; but saw no signs of the drowning man; yet the night was clear. Then I knew that his fate was sealed; and, for reasons of my own, not choosing to be seen by those who were coming to his aid, I hastened from the place. My happiness being gone, and my conscience smiting me sore, and not knowing whither to turn, I took to drink, and fell into bad ways, and lived like a brute and not a man, for six weeks or more; so that I never knew of the good fortune that had fallen on me when least I deserved it; I mean by old Mr. Gaunt of Coggleswade making of me his heir. But one day at Kendal I saw Mercy Vint's advertisement; and I went to her, and learned that my wife lay in Carlisle gaol for my supposed murder. But I say that she is innocent, and nowise to blame in this matter; for I deserved every hard word she ever gave me; and,

as for killing, she is a spirited woman with her tongue, but hath not the heart to kill a fly. She is what she always was, the pearl of womankind; a virtuous, innocent, and noble lady. I have lost the treasure of her love, by my fault, not hers; but, at least, I have a right to defend her life and honour. Whoever molests her after this, out of pretended regard for me, is a liar, and a fool, and no friend of mine, but my enemy, and I his—to the death.

“GRIFFITH GAUNT.”

It was a day of surprises. This tribute from the murdered man to his assassin, was one of them. People looked in one another's faces open-eyed.

The prisoner looked in the judge's, and acted on what she saw there. “That is my defence,” said she, quietly; and sat down.

If a show of hands had been called at that moment, she would have been acquitted by acclamation.

But Mr. Whitworth was a zealous young barrister, burning for distinction. He stuck to his case, and cross-examined Mercy Vint with severity; indeed, with asperity.

Whitworth. What are you to receive for this evidence?

Mercy. Anan.

Whitworth. Oh, you know what I mean. Are you not to be paid for telling us this romance?

Mercy. Nay, sir, I ask nought for telling the truth.

Whitworth. You were in the prisoner's company yesterday.

Mercy. Yes, sir, I did visit her in the gaol last night.

Whitworth. And there concerted this ingenious defence.

Mercy. Well, sir, for that matter, I told her that her man was alive, and I did offer to be her witness.

Whitworth. For nought.

Mercy. For no money or reward, if 'tis that you mean. Why, 'tis a joy beyond money, to clear an innocent body, and save her life; and that satisfaction is mine this day.

Whitworth (sarcastically). These are very fine sentiments for a person in your condition. Confess that Mrs. Gaunt primed you with all that.

Mercy. Nay, sir, I left home in that mind; else I had not come at all. Bethink you; 'tis a long journey for one in my way of life; and this dear child on my arm all the way.

Mrs. Gaunt sat boiling with indignation. But Mercy's good temper and meekness parried the attack that time. Mr. Whitworth changed his line.

Whitworth. You ask the jury to believe that Griffith Gaunt, Esquire, a gentleman, and a man of spirit and honour, is alive, yet skulks and sends you hither, when by showing his face in this court he could clear his wife without a single word spoken?

Mercy. Yes, sir, I do hope to be believed; for I speak the naked truth. But, with due respect to you, Mr. Gaunt did not send me hither against my will. I could not bide in Lancashire, and let an innocent woman be murdered in Cumberland.

Whitworth. Murdered, quotha. That is a good jest. I'd have you to know we punish murders here, not do them.

Mercy. I am glad to hear that, sir, on the lady's account.

Whitworth. Come, come. You pretend you discovered this Griffith Gaunt alive, by means of an advertisement. If so, produce the advertisement.

Mercy Vint coloured, and cast a swift uneasy glance at Mrs. Gaunt.

Rapid as it was, the keen eye of the counsel caught it.

"Nay, do not look to the culprit for orders," said he. "Produce it, or confess the truth. Come, you never advertised for him."

"Sir, I did advertise for him.

"Then produce the advertisement."

"Sir, I will not," said *Mercy*, calmly."

"Then I shall move the court to commit you."

"For what offence, if you please?"

"For perjury, and contempt of court."

"I am guiltless of either, God knows. But I will not show the advertisement."

The Judge. This is very extraordinary. Perhaps you have it not about you."

Mercy. My lord, the truth is I have it in my bosom. But, if I show it, it will not make this matter one whit clearer, and 'twill open the wounds of two poor women. 'Tis not for myself. But, oh my lord, look at her; hath she not gone through grief enow?

The appeal was made with a quiet touching earnestness, that affected every hearer. But the judge had a duty to perform. "Witness," said he, "you mean well; but indeed you do the prisoner an injury by withholding this paper. Be good enough to produce it at once."

The Prisoner (with a deep sigh). Obey my lord.

Mercy (with a patient sigh). There, sir, may the Lord forgive you the useless mischief you are doing.

Whitworth. I am doing my duty, young woman. And yours is to tell the whole truth, and not a part only.

Mercy (acquiescing). That is true, sir.

Whitworth. Why, what is this? 'Tis not Mr. Gaunt you advertise for in these papers. 'Tis Thomas Leicester.

The Judge. What is that? I don't understand.

Whitworth. Nor I neither.

The Judge. Let me see the papers. 'Tis Thomas Leicester sure enough.

Whitworth. And you mean to swear that Griffith Gaunt answered an advertisement inviting Thomas Leicester?

Mercy. I do. Thomas Leicester was the name he went by in our part.

Whitworth. What? what? You are jesting.

Mercy. Is this a place or a time for jesting? I say he called himself Thomas Leicester.

Here the business was interrupted again by a multitudinous murmur of excited voices. Everybody was whispering astonishment to his neighbour. And the whisper of a great crowd has the effect of a loud murmur.

Whitworth. Oh, he called himself Thomas Leicester, did he? Then what makes you think he is Griffith Gaunt?

Mercy. Well sir, the pedlar, whose real name was Thomas Leicester, came to our house one day, and saw his picture, and knew it; and said something to a neighbour that raised my suspicions. When he came home, I took this shirt out of a drawer; 'twas the shirt he wore when he first came to us. 'Tis marked "G. G." (The shirt was examined). Said I, "For God's sake speak the truth: what does G. G. stand for?" Then he told me his real name was Griffith Gaunt, and he had a wife in Cumberland. "Go back to her," said I, "and ask her to forgive you." Then he rode north, and I never saw him again till last Wednesday.

Whitworth (satirically). You seem to have been mighty intimate with this Thomas Leicester, whom you now call Griffith Gaunt. May I ask what was, or is, the nature of your connection with him?

Mercy was silent.

Whitworth. I must press for a reply, that we may know what value to attach to your most extraordinary evidence. Were you his wife,—or his mistress?

Mercy. Indeed I hardly know; but not his mistress, or I should not be here.

Whitworth. You don't know whether you were married to the man or not?

Mercy. I do not say so. But——

She hesitated, and cast a piteous look at Mrs. Gaunt, who sat boiling with indignation.

At this look, the prisoner, who had long contained herself with difficulty, rose, with scarlet cheeks and flashing eyes, in defence of her witness, and flung her prudence to the wind.

"Fie, sir," she cried. "The woman you insult is as pure as your own mother, or mine. She deserves the pity, the respect, the veneration of all good men. Know, my lord, that my miserable husband deceived and married her under the false name he had taken; she has the marriage certificate in her bosom. Pray make her show it whether she will or not. My lord, this Mercy Vint is more an angel than a woman. I am her rival after a manner; yet out of the goodness and greatness of her noble heart, she came all that way to save me from an unjust death. And is such a woman to be insulted? I blush for the hired advocate who cannot see his superior in an incorruptible witness, a creature all truth, piety, purity, unselfishness, and goodness. Yes, sir, you began by insinuating that she was as venal as yourself; for you are one that can be bought by the first comer; and now you would cast a slur on her chastity. For shame! for shame! This is one of those rare women that adorn our whole sex, and embellish human nature: and, so long as you have the privilege of exchanging words with her, I shall stand here on the watch, to see that you treat her with due respect: ay, sir, with reverence; for I have measured you both, and she is as much your superior, as she is mine."

This amazing burst was delivered with such prodigious fire and rapidity, that nobody was self-possessed enough to stop it in time. It was like a furious gust of words sweeping over the court.

Mr. Whitworth, pale with anger, merely said, "Madam, the good taste of these remarks I leave the court to decide upon. But you cannot be allowed to give evidence in your own defence."

"No, but in hers I will," said Mrs. Gaunt; "no power shall hinder me."

The Judge (coldly). Had you not better go on cross-examining the witness?

Whitworth. Let me see your marriage certificate, if you have one?

It was handed to him.

"Well, now how do you know that this Thomas Leicester was Griffith Gaunt?"

The Judge. Why, she has told you he confessed it to her.

Mercy. Yes, my lord; and, besides, he wrote me two letters signed Thomas Leicester. Here they are, and I desire they may be compared with the paper he wrote last Wednesday, and signed Griffith Gaunt. And more than that, whilst we lived together as man and wife, one Hamilton, a travelling painter, took our portraits, his and mine. I have brought his with me. Let his friends and neighbours look on this portrait, and say whose likeness it is. What I say and swear is, that on Wednesday last I saw and spoke with that Thomas Leicester, or Griffith Gaunt, whose likeness I now show you.

With that she lifted the portrait up, and showed it to all the court.

Instantly there was a roar of recognition.

It was one of those hard daubs that are nevertheless so monstrously like the originals.

The Judge (to Mr. Whitworth). Young gentleman, we are all greatly obliged to you. You have made the prisoner's case. There was but one weak point in it; I mean the prolonged absence of Griffith Gaunt. You have now accounted for that. You have forced a very truthful witness to depose that this Gaunt is himself a criminal, and is hiding from fear of the law. The case for the crown is a mere tissue of conjectures, on which no jury could safely convict, even if there was no defence at all. Under other circumstances I might decline to receive evidence at second-hand that Griffith Gaunt is alive. But here such evidence is sufficient, for it lies on the crown to prove the man dead; but you have only proved that he was alive on the fifteenth of October, and that, since then, *somebody* is dead with shoes on. This somebody appears on the balance of proof to be Thomas Leicester, the pedlar; and he has never been heard of since, and Griffith Gaunt has. Then I say you cannot carry the case farther. You have not a leg to stand on. What say you, brother Wiltshire?

Wiltshire. My lord, I think there is no case against the prisoner, and am thankful to your lordship for relieving me of a very unpleasant task.

The question of guilty or not guilty was then put as a matter of form to the jury, who instantly brought the prisoner in not guilty.

The Judge. Catherine Gaunt, you leave this court without a stain, and with our sincere respect and sympathy. I much regret the fear and pain you have been put to: you have been terribly punished for a hasty word. Profit now by this bitter lesson; and may heaven enable you to add a well-governed spirit to your many virtues and graces.

He half rose from his seat, and bowed courteously to her. She curtsied reverently, and retired.

He then said a few words to Mercy Vint.

"Young woman, I have no words to praise you as you deserve. You have shown us the beauty of the female character, and, let me add, the beauty of the Christian religion. You have come a long way to clear the innocent. I hope you will not stop there; but also punish the guilty person, on whom we have wasted so much pity."

"Me, my lord," said Mercy, "I would not harm a hair of his head for as many guineas as there be hairs in mine."

"Child," said my lord, "thou art too good for this world: but go thy ways; and God bless thee."

Thus abruptly ended a trial that, at first, had looked so formidable for the accused.

The judge now retired for some refreshment, and while he was gone, Sir George Neville dashed up to the Town Hall, four in hand, and rushed in by the magistrate's door, with a pedlar's pack, which he had discovered in the mere, a few yards from the spot where the mutilated body was found.

He learned the prisoner was already acquitted. He left the pack with the sheriff, and begged him to show it to the judge; and went in search of Mrs. Gaunt.

He found her in the gaoler's house. She and Mercy Vint were seated hand in hand. He started at first sight of the latter. Then there was an universal shaking of hands, and glistening of eyes. And, when this was over, Mrs. Gaunt turned to him, and said, piteously, "She will go back to Lancashire to-morrow; nothing I can say will turn her."

"No, dame," said Mercy, quietly, "Cumberland is no place for me. My work is done here. Our paths in this world do lie apart. George Neville, persuade her to go home at once, and not trouble about me."

"Indeed, madam," said Sir George, "she speaks wisely: she always does. My carriage is at the door, and the people waiting by thousands in the street to welcome your deliverance."

Mrs. Gaunt drew herself up with fiery and bitter disdain.

"Are they so?" said she, grimly. "Then I'll baulk them. I'll steal away in the dead of night. No, miserable populace, that howls and hisses with the strong against the weak, you shall have no part in my triumph; 'tis sacred to my friends. You honoured me with your hootings, you shall not disgrace me with your acclamations. Here I stay till Mercy Vint, my guardian angel, leaves me for ever."

She then requested Sir George to order his horses back to the inn, and the coachman was to hold himself in readiness to start when the whole town should be asleep.

Meantime a courier was despatched to *Hernshaw Castle*, to prepare for Mrs. Gaunt's reception.

Mrs. Menteith made a bed up for Mercy Vint, and, at midnight, when the coast was clear, came the parting.

It was a sad one.

Even Mercy, who had great self-command, could not then restrain her tears.

To apply the sweet and touching words of Scripture, "They sorrowed most of all for this, that they should see each other's face no more."

Sir George accompanied Mrs. Gaunt to Hernshaw.

She drew back into her corner of the carriage, and was very silent and distraite.

After one or two attempts at conversation, he judged it wisest and even most polite to respect her mood.

At last she burst out, "I cannot bear it, I cannot bear it."

"Why, what is amiss?" inquired Sir George.

"What is amiss? Why, 'tis all amiss. 'Tis so heartless, so ungrateful, to let that poor angel go home to Lancashire all alone, now she has served my turn. Sir George, do not think I undervalue your company, but if you would but take her home instead of taking me! Poor thing, she is brave; but, when the excitement of her good action is over, and she goes back the weary road all alone, what desolation it will be. My heart bleeds for her. I know I am an unconscionable woman, to ask such a thing; but then you are a true chevalier; you always were, and you saw her merit directly. Oh, do pray leave me to slip unnoticed into Hernshaw Castle, and do you accompany my benefactress to her humble home. Will you, dear Sir George? 'Twould be such a load off my heart."

To this appeal, uttered with trembling lip and moist eyes, Sir George replied in character. He declined to desert Mrs. Gaunt, until he had seen her safe home; but that done, he would ride back to Carlisle, and escort Mercy home.

Mrs. Gaunt sighed, and said she was abusing his friendship, and should kill him with fatigue, and he was a good creature. "If anything could make me easy, this would," said she: "you know how to talk to a woman, and comfort her. I wish I was a man: I'd cure her of Griffith before we reached the 'Packhorse.' And, now I think of it, you are a very happy man to travel eighty miles with an angel, a dove-eyed angel."

"I am a happy man to have an opportunity of complying with your desires, madam," was the demure reply. "'Tis not often you do me the honour to lay your orders on me."

After this, nothing of any moment passed until they reached Hernshaw Castle; and then, as they drove up to the door, and saw the hall blazing with lights, Mrs. Gaunt laid her hand softly on Sir George, and whispered, "You were right. I thank you for not leaving me."

The servants were all in the hall, to receive their mistress; and amongst them were those who had given honest but unfavourable testimony at the trial, being called by the crown. These had consulted together, and, after many pros and cons, had decided that they had better not follow their natural impulse, and hide from her face, since that might be a fresh offence. Accordingly, these witnesses, dressed in their best, stood with the others in the hall, and made their obeisances, quaking inwardly.

Mrs. Gaunt entered the hall leaning on Sir George's arm. She scarcely

bestowed a look upon any of her servants, but made them one sweeping curtsy in return, and passed on; only Sir George felt her taper fingers just nip his arm.

She made him partake of some supper, and then this chevalier des dames rode home, snatched a few hours' sleep, put on the yeoman's suit in which he had first visited the "Packhorse," and arriving at Carlisle, engaged the whole inside of the coach; for his orders were to console, and he did not see his way clear to do that with two or three strangers listening to every word.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A GREAT change was observable in Mrs. Gaunt after this fiery and chastening ordeal. In a short time she had been taught many lessons: she had learned that the law will not allow even a woman to say anything and everything with impunity: she had been in a court of justice, and seen how gravely, soberly, and fairly, an accusation is sifted there; and, if false, annihilated; which, elsewhere, it never is. Member of a sex that could never have invented a court of justice, she had found something to revere and bless in that other sex, to which her erring husband belonged. Finally, she had encountered, in Mercy Vint, a woman whom she recognised at once as her moral superior. The contact of that pure and well-governed spirit told wonderfully upon her; she began to watch her tongue, and to bridle her high spirit. She became slower to give offence, and slower to take it. She took herself to task, and made some little excuses even for Griffith. She was resolved to retire from the world altogether; but, meantime, she bowed her head to the lessons of adversity. Her features, always lovely, but somewhat too haughty, were now softened and embellished beyond description, by a mingled expression of grief, humility, and resignation.

She never mentioned her husband; but it is not to be supposed she never thought of him. She waited the course of events in dignified and patient silence.

As for Griffith Gaunt, he was in the hands of two lawyers, Atkins and Houseman. He waited on the first, and made a friend of him. "I am at your service," said he; "but not if I am to be indicted for bigamy, and burned in the hand."

"These fears are idle," said Atkins. "Mercy Vint declared in open court she will not proceed against you."

"Ay, but there's my wife."

"She will keep quiet; I have Houseman's word for it."

"Ay, but there's the Attorney-General."

"Oh, he will not move, unless he is driven. We must use a little influence. Mr. Houseman is of my mind, and he has the ear of the county."

To be brief, it was represented in high quarters that to indict Mr. Gaunt would only open Mrs. Gaunt's wounds afresh, and do no good; and so Houseman found means to muzzle the Attorney-General.

Just three weeks after the trial, Griffith Gaunt, Esq., reappeared publicly. The place of his reappearance was Coggleswade. He came and set about

finishing his new mansion with feverish rapidity. He engaged an army of carpenters and painters, and spent thousands of pounds on the decorating and furnishing of the mansion, and laying out the grounds.

This was duly reported to Mrs. Gaunt, who said—not a word.

But at last one day came a letter to Mrs. Gaunt, in Griffith's well-known handwriting.

With all her acquired self-possession, her hand trembled as she broke open the seal.

It contained but these words:—

"MADAM,—I do not ask you to forgive me. For, if you had done what I have, I could never forgive you. But, for the sake of Rose, and to stop their tongues, I do hope you will do me the honour to live under this my roof. I dare not face Hernshaw Castle. Your own apartments here are now ready for you. The place is large. Upon my honour I will not trouble you; but show myself always, as now,

"Your penitent and very humble servant.

"GRIFFITH GAUNT."

The messenger was to wait for her reply.

This letter disturbed Mrs. Gaunt's sorrowful tranquillity at once. She was much agitated, and so undecided, that she sent the messenger away, and told him to call next day.

Then she sent off to Father Francis to beg his advice.

But her courier returned, late at night, to say Father Francis was away from home.

Then she took Rose, and said to her, "My darling, papa wants us to go to his new house, and leave dear old Hernshaw; I know not what to say about that. What do you say?"

"Tell him to come to us," said Rose, dictatorially. "Only," (lowering her little voice very suddenly), "if he is naughty and wont, why then we had better go to him. For he amuses me."

"As you please," said Mrs. Gaunt; and sent her husband this reply:—

"SIR,—Rose and I are agreed to defer to your judgment and obey your wishes. Be pleased to let me know what day you will require us; and I must trouble you to send a carriage.

"I am, sir,

"Your faithful wife, and humble servant,

"CATHERINE GAUNT."

At the appointed day, a carriage and four came wheeling up to the door. The vehicle was gorgeously emblazoned, and the servants in rich liveries; all which finery glittering in the sun, and the glossy coats of the horses, did mightily please Mistress Rose. She stood on the stone steps, and clapped her hands with delight. Her mother just sighed, and said, "Ay, 'tis in pomp and show we must seek our happiness now."

She leaned back in the carriage, and closed her eyes, yet not so close but now and then a tear would steal out, as she thought of the past.

They drove up under an avenue to a noble mansion, and landed at the foot of some marble steps, low and narrow, but of vast breadth.

As they mounted these, a hall door, through which the carriage could have passed, was flung open, and discovered the servants all drawn up to do honour to their mistress.

She entered the hall, leading Rose by the hand; the servants bowed and curtsied down to the ground.

She received this homage with dignified courtesy, and her eye stole round to see if the master of the house was coming to receive her.

The library door was opened hastily, and out came to meet her—Father Francis.

"Welcome, madam, a thousand times welcome to your new home," said he, in a stentorian voice, with a double infusion of geniality. "I claim the honour of showing you your part of the house, though 'tis all yours for that matter." And he led the way.

Now this cheerful stentorian voice was just a little shaky for once, and his eyes were moist.

Mrs. Gaunt noticed, but said nothing before the people. She smiled graciously, and accompanied him.

He took her to her apartments. They consisted of a *salle-à-manger*, three delightful bedrooms, a boudoir, and a magnificent drawing-room, fifty feet long, with two fireplaces, and a bay window thirty feet wide, filled with the choicest flowers.

An exclamation of delight escaped Mrs. Gaunt. Then she said, "One would think I was a queen." Then she sighed: "Ah," said she, "'tis a fine thing to be rich." Then, despondently, "Tell him I think it very beautiful."

"Nay, madam, I hope you will tell him so yourself."

Mrs. Gaunt made no reply to that; she added: "And it was kind of him to have you here the first day: I do not feel so lonely as I should without you."

She took Griffith at his word, and lived with Rose in her own apartments.

For some time Griffith used to slip away whenever he saw her coming.

One day she caught him at it, and beckoned him.

He came to her.

"You need not run away from me," said she: "I did not come into your house to quarrel with you. Let us be *friends*." And she gave him her hand sweetly enough, but oh so coldly.

"I hope for nothing more," said Griffith. "If you ever have a wish, give me the pleasure of gratifying it—that is all."

"I wish to retire to a convent," said she, quietly.

"And desert your daughter?"

"I would leave her behind; to remind you of days gone by."

By degrees they saw a little more of one another; they even dined together, now and then. But it brought them no nearer. There was no anger, with its loving reaction. They were friendly enough, but an icy barrier stood between them.

One person set himself quietly to sap this barrier. Father Francis was often at the Castle, and played the peace-maker very adroitly.

The line he took might be called the innocent Jesuitical. He saw that it would be useless to exhort these two persons to ignore the terrible things that had happened, and to make it up as if it was only a squabble. What he did was to repeat to the husband every gracious word the wife let fall, and *vice versa*, and to suppress all either said that might tend to estrange them.

In short, he acted the part of Mr. Harmony in the play, and acted it to perfection.

Gutta cavat lapidem.

Though no perceptible effect followed his efforts, yet there is no doubt that he got rid of some of the bitterness. But the coldness remained.

One day he was sent for all in a hurry by Griffith.

He found him looking gloomy and agitated.

The cause came out directly. Griffith had observed, at last, what all the females in the house had seen two months ago, that Mrs. Gaunt was in the family-way.

He now communicated this to Father Francis, with a voice of agony, and looks to match.

"All the better, my son," said the genial priest: "'twill be another tie between you. I hope it will be a fine boy to inherit your estates." Then, observing a certain hideous expression distorting Griffith's face, he fixed his eyes full on him, and said, sternly, "Are you not cured yet of that madness of yours?"

"No, no, no," said Griffith, deprecatingly; "but why did she not tell me?"

"You had better ask her."

"Not I. She will remind me I am nothing to her now. And, though 'tis so, yet I would not hear it from her lips."

In spite of this wise resolution, the torture he was in drove him to remonstrate with her on her silence.

She blushed high, and excused herself as follows:

"I should have told you as soon as I knew it myself. But you were not with me. I was all by myself—in Carlisle gaol."

This reply, uttered with hypocritical meekness, went through Griffith like a knife. He turned white, and gasped for breath, but said nothing. He left her, with a deep groan, and never ventured to mention the matter again.

All he did in that direction was to redouble his attentions and solicitude for her health.

The relation between these two was now more anomalous than ever.

Even Father Francis, who had seen strange things in families, used to watch Mrs. Gaunt rise from table and walk heavily to the door, and her husband dart to it and open it obsequiously, and receive only a very formal reverence in return,—and wonder how all this was to end.

However, under this icy surface, a change was gradually going on; and one afternoon, to his great surprise, Mrs. Gaunt's maid came to ask Griffith if he would come to Mrs. Gaunt's apartment.

He found her seated in her bay window, among her flowers. She seemed

another woman all of a sudden, and smiled on him her exquisite smile of days gone by.

"Come, sit beside me," said she, "in this beautiful window that you have given me."

"Sit beside you, Kate," said Griffith; "nay, let me kneel at your knees; that is my place."

"As you will," said she, softly; and continued, in the same tone, "Now listen to me; you and I are two fools; we have been very happy together in days gone by; and we should both of us like to try again; but we neither of us know how to begin. You are afraid to tell me you love me, and I am ashamed to own to you or anybody else that I love you, in spite of it all—I do, though."

"You love me! a wretch like me, Kate? 'Tis impossible. I cannot be so happy."

"Child," said Mrs. Gaunt, "love is not reason; love is not common sense. 'Tis a passion; like your jealousy, poor fool. I love you, as a mother loves her child, all the more for all you have made me suffer. I might not say as much if I thought we should be long together. But something tells me I shall die this time: I never felt so before. I want you to bury me at Hernshaw. After all, I spent more happy years there than most wives ever know. I see you are very sorry for what you have done. How could I die and leave thee in doubt of my forgiveness, and my love? Kiss me, poor jealous fool; for I do forgive thee, and love thee with all my sorrowful heart." And even with the words she bowed herself and sank quietly into his arms, and he kissed her and cried bitterly over her: bitterly. But she was comparatively calm. For she said to herself, "the end is at hand."

Griffith, instead of pooh-poohing his wife's forebodings, set himself to baffle them.

He used his wealth freely; and, besides the county doctor, had two very eminent practitioners from London, one of whom was a grey-headed man, the other singularly young for the fame he had obtained. But then he was a genuine enthusiast in his art.

CHAPTER XLIV.

GRIFFITH, white as a ghost, and unable to shake off the forebodings Catherine had communicated to him, walked incessantly up and down the room; and at his earnest request, one or other of the four doctors in attendance was constantly coming to him with information.

The case proceeded favourably, and to Griffith's surprise and joy, a healthy boy was born about two o'clock in the morning. The mother was reported rather feverish, but nothing to cause alarm.

Griffith threw himself on two chairs and fell fast asleep.

Towards morning he found himself shaken, and there was Ashley, the young doctor, standing beside him with a very grave face. Griffith started up, and cried, "What is wrong, in God's name?"

"I am sorry to say there has been a sudden hæmorrhage, and the patient is much exhausted."

"She is dying, she is dying!" cried Griffith, in anguish.

"Not dying. But she will infallibly sink unless some unusual circumstance occur to sustain vitality."

Griffith laid hold of him. "Oh, sir, take my whole fortune, but save her! save her! save her!"

"Mr. Gaunt," said the young doctor, "be calm, or you will make matters worse. There is one chance to save her; but my professional brethren are prejudiced against it. However, they have consented, at my earnest request, to refer my proposal to you. She is sinking for want of blood: if you consent to my opening a vein and transfusing healthy blood from a living subject into hers, I will undertake the operation. You had better come and see her; you will be more able to judge."

"Let me lean on you," said Griffith. And the strong wrestler went tottering up the stairs. There they showed him poor Kate, white as the bed-clothes, breathing hard, and with a pulse that hardly moved.

Griffith looked at her horror-struck.

"Death has got hold of my darling," he screamed. "Snatch her away, for God's sake, snatch her from him!"

The young doctor whipped off his coat, and bared his arm.

"There," he cried, "Mr. Gaunt consents. Now, Corrie, be quick with the lancet, and hold this tube as I tell you; warm it first in that water."

Here came an interruption. Griffith Gaunt griped the young doctor's arm, and with an agonized and ugly expression of countenance cried out, "What? *your* blood! What right have you to lose blood for her?"

"The right of a man who loves his art better than his blood," cried Ashley, with enthusiasm.

Griffith tore off his coat and waistcoat, and bared his arm to the elbow. "Take every drop I have. No man's blood shall enter her veins but mine." And the creature seemed to swell to double his size, as with flushed cheek and sparkling eyes he held out a bare arm corded like a blacksmith's, and white as a duchess's.

The young doctor eyed the magnificent limb a moment with rapture: then fixed his apparatus and performed an operation which then, as now, was impossible in theory; only he did it. He sent some of Griffith Gaunt's bright red blood smoking hot into Kate Gaunt's veins.

This done, he watched his patient closely, and administered stimulants from time to time.

She hung between life and death for hours. But at noon next day she spoke, and seeing Griffith sitting beside her, pale with anxiety and loss of blood, she said, "My dear, do not thou fret. I died last night. I knew I should. But they gave me another life; and now I shall live to a hundred."

They showed her the little boy; and, at sight of him, the whole woman made up her mind to live.

And live she did. And, what is very remarkable, her convalescence was more rapid than on any former occasion.

It was from a talkative nurse she first learned that Griffith had given his blood for her. She said nothing at the time, but lay with an angelic, happy smile, thinking of it.

The first time she saw him after that, she laid her hand on his arm, and looking Heaven itself into his eyes, she said, "My life is very dear to me now. 'Tis a present from thee."

She only wanted a good excuse for loving him as frankly as before, and now he had given her one. She used to throw it in his teeth in the prettiest way. Whenever she confessed a fault, she was sure to turn slyly round and say, "but what could one expect of me? I have his blood in my veins."

But once she told Father Francis, quite seriously, that she had never been quite the same woman since she lived by Griffith's blood; she was turned jealous; and moreover it had given him a fascinating power over her; and she could tell blindfold when he was in the room. Which last fact indeed she once proved by actual experiment. But all this I leave to such as study the occult sciences in this profound age of ours.

Starting with this advantage, Time, the great curer, gradually healed a wound that looked incurable.

Mrs. Gaunt became a better wife than she had ever been before. She studied her husband, and found he was not hard to please. She made his home bright and genial; and so he never went abroad for the sunshine he could have at home.

And he studied her; he added a chapel to the house, and easily persuaded Francis to become the chaplain. Thus they had a peacemaker, and a friend, in the house, and a man severe in morals, but candid in religion, and an inexhaustible companion to them and their children.

And so, after that terrible storm, this pair pursued the even tenour of a peaceful united life, till the olive branches rising around them, and the happy years gliding on, almost obliterated that one dark passage, and made it seem a mere fantastical, incredible, dream.

Mercy Vint and her child went home in the coach. It was empty at starting, and, as Mrs. Gaunt had foretold, a great sense of desolation fell upon her.

She leaned back, and the patient tears coursed steadily down her comely cheeks.

At the first stage a passenger got down from the outside, and entered the coach.

"What, George Neville!" said Mercy.

"The same," said he.

She expressed her surprise that he should be going her way.

"'Tis strange," said he; "but, to me most agreeable."

"And to me too, for that matter," said she.

Sir George observed her eyes were red, and, to divert her mind and keep up her spirits, launched into a flow of small talk.

In the midst of it Mercy leaned back in the coach, and began to cry bitterly. So much for that mode of consolation.

Upon this he faced the situation, and begged her not to grieve. He praised the good action she had done, and told her how everybody admired her for it, especially himself.

At that she gave him her hand in silence, and turned away her pretty head. He carried her hand respectfully to his lips; and his manly heart began to yearn over this suffering virtue; so grave, so dignified, so meek. He was no longer a young man; he began to talk to her like a friend. This tone, and the soft sympathetic voice in which a gentleman speaks to a woman in trouble, unlocked her heart, and for the first time in her life she was led to talk about herself.

She opened her heart to him. She told him she was not the woman to pine for any man. Her youth, her health, and love of occupation, would carry her through. What she mourned was the loss of esteem, and the blot upon her child. At that she drew the baby with inexpressible tenderness, and yet with a half defiant air, closer to her bosom.

Sir George assured her she would lose the esteem of none but fools. "As for me," said he, "I always respected you, but now I revere you. You are a martyr, and an angel."

"George," said Mercy, gravely, "be you my friend, not my enemy."

"Why, madam," said he, "sure you can't think me such a wretch."

"I mean, our flatterers are our enemies."

Sir George took the hint, given, as it was, very gravely and decidedly; and henceforth showed her his respect by his acts; he paid her as much attention as if she had been a princess. He handed her out, and handed her in; and coaxed her to eat here, and to drink there; and at the inn where the passengers slept for the night, he showed his long purse, and secured her superior comforts. Console her he could not; but he broke the sense of utter desolation and loneliness with which she started from Carlisle. She told him so in the inn, and descanted on the goodness of God, who had sent her a friend in that bitter hour.

"You have been very kind to me, George," said she. "Now Heaven bless you for it, and give you many happy days, and well spent."

This, from one who never said a word she did not mean, sank deep into Sir George's heart, and he went to sleep thinking of her, and asking himself was there nothing he could do for her.

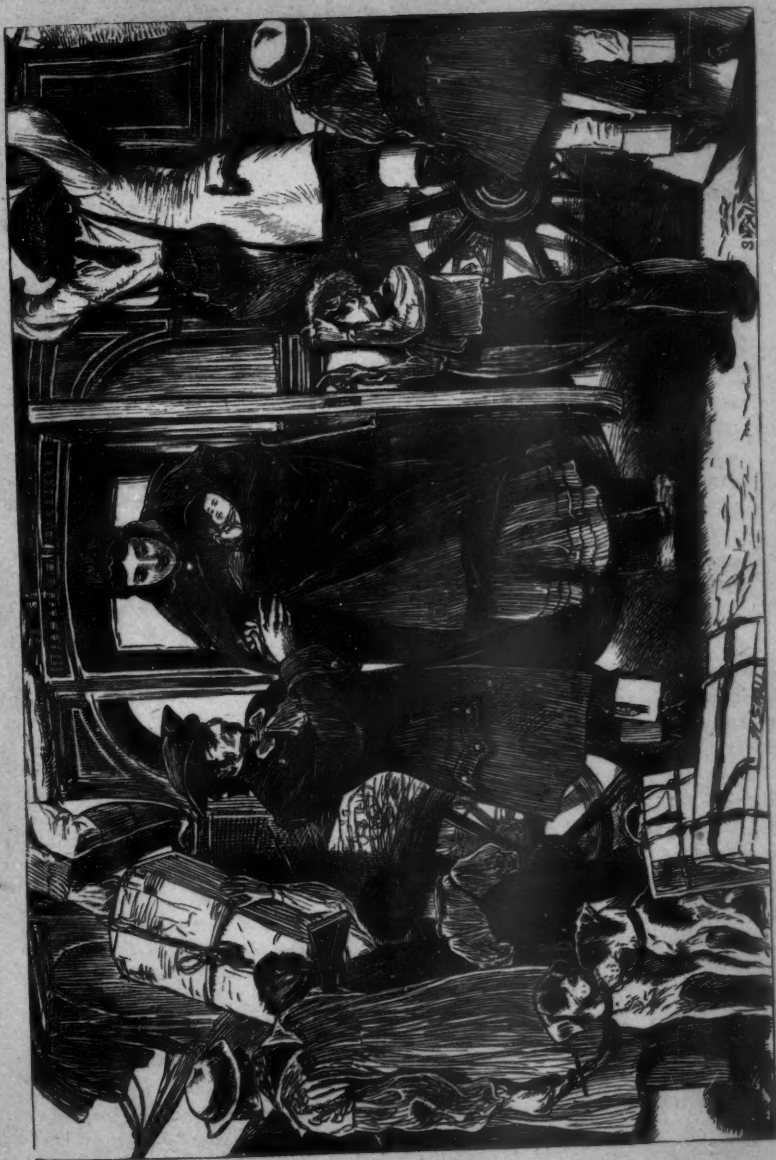
Next morning Sir George handed Mercy and her babe into the coach; and the villain tried an experiment to see what value she set on him. He did not get in, so Mercy thought she had seen the last of him.

"Farewell, good, kind George," said she; "alas, there's nought but meeting and parting in this weary world."

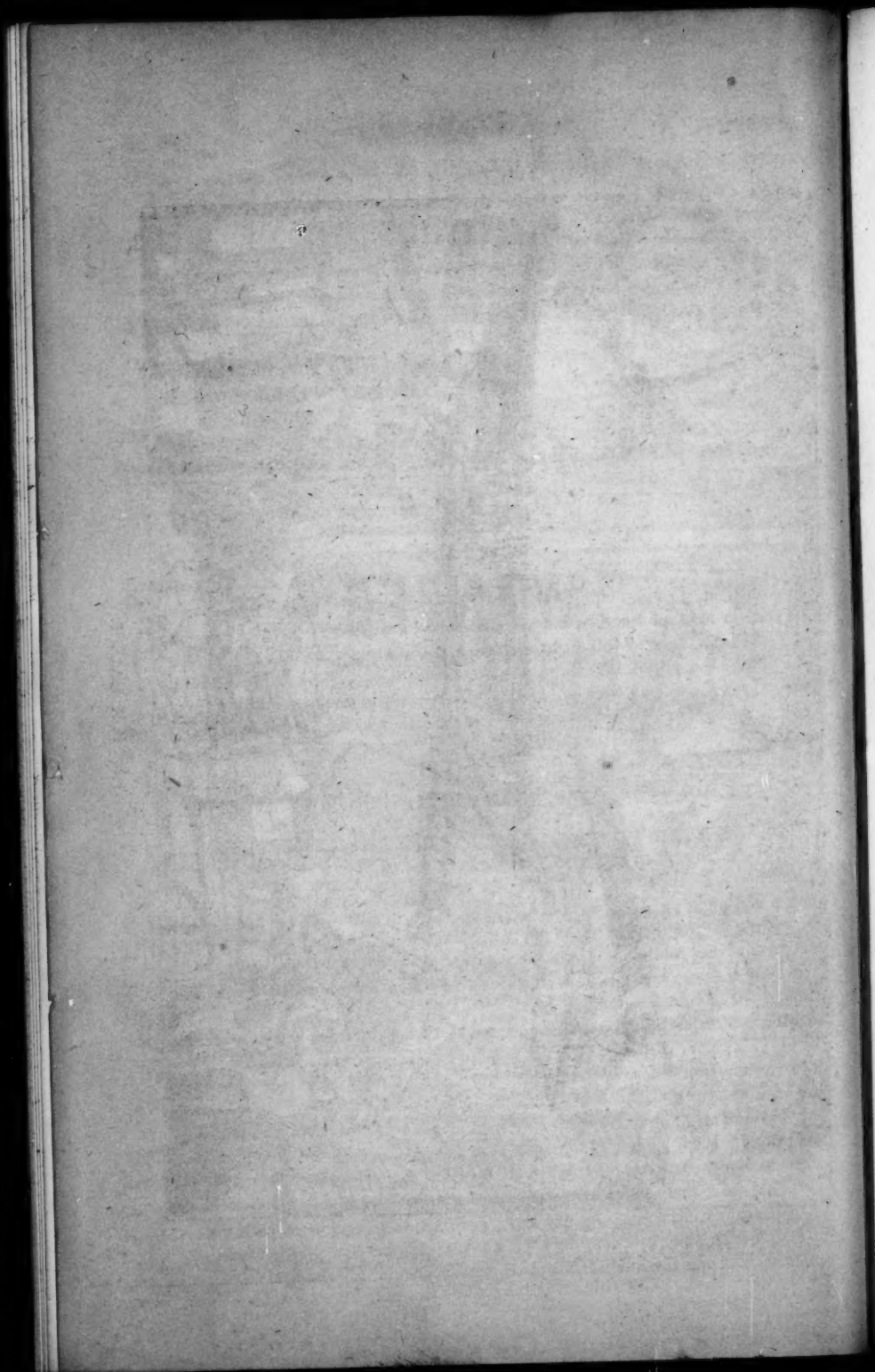
The tears stood in her sweet eyes, and she thanked him, not with words only, but with the soft pressure of her womanly hand.

He slipped up behind the coach, and was ashamed of himself, and his heart warmed to her more and more.

As soon as the coach stopped, my lord opened the door for Mercy to alight. Her eyes were very red, he saw that. She started, and beamed with surprise and pleasure.



"GRIFFITH GAUNT."



"Why, I thought I had lost you for good," said she. "Whither are you going? to Lancaster?"

"Not quite so far. I am going to the 'Packhorse.'"

Mercy opened her eyes, and blushed high. Sir George saw, and, to divert her suspicions, told her merrily to beware of making objections. "I am only a sort of servant in the matter. 'Twas Mrs. Gaunt ordered me."

"I might have guessed it," said Mercy. "Bless her; she knew I should be lonely."

"She was not easy till she had got rid of me, I assure you," said Sir George. "So let us make the best of it, for she is a lady that likes to have her own way."

"She is a noble creature. George, I shall never regret anything I have done for *her*. And she will not be ungrateful. Oh, the sting of ingratitude! I have felt that. Have you?"

"No," said Sir George; "I have escaped that, by never doing any good actions."

"I doubt you are telling me a lie," said Mercy Vint.

She now looked upon Sir George as Mrs. Gaunt's representative, and prattled freely to him. Only now and then her trouble came over her, and then she took a quiet cry without ceremony.

As for Sir George, he sat and studied, and wondered at her.

Never in his life had he met such a woman as this, who was as candid with him as if he had been a woman. She seemed to have a window in her bosom, through which he looked, and saw the pure and lovely soul within.

In the afternoon they reached a little town, whence a cart conveyed them to the "Packhorse."

Here Mercy Vint disappeared, and busied herself with Sir George's comforts.

He sat by himself in the parlour, and missed his gentle companion.

In the morning Mercy thought of course he would go.

But instead of that, he stayed, and followed her about, and began to court her downright.

But the warmer he got, the cooler she. And at last she said, mighty drily, "This is a very dull place for the likes of you."

"'Tis the sweetest place in England," said he; "at least to me; for it contains—the woman I love."

Mercy drew back, and coloured rosy red. "I hope not," said she.

"I loved you the first day I saw you, and heard your voice. And now I love you ten times more. Let me dry thy tears for ever, sweet Mercy. Be my wife."

"You are mad," said Mercy. "What, would you wed a woman in my condition? I am more your friend than to take you at your word. And what do you think I am made of, to go from one man to another, like that?"

"Take your time, sweetheart; only give me your hand."

"George," said Mercy, very gravely, "I am beholden to you; but my duty it lies another way. There is a young man in these parts (Sir George groaned) that was my follower for two years and better. I wronged him for

one I never name now. I must marry that poor lad, and make him happy, or else live and die as I am."

Sir George turned pale. "One word: do you love him?"

"I have a regard for him."

"Do you love him?"

"Hardly. But I wronged him, and I owe him amends. I shall pay my debts."

Sir George bowed, and retired sick at heart, and deeply mortified. Mercy looked after him and sighed.

Next day, as he walked disconsolate up and down, she came to him and gave him her hand. "You were a good friend to me that bitter day," said she. "Now let me be yours. Do not bide here: 'twill but vex you."

"I am going, madam," said Sir George, stiffly. "I but wait to see the man you prefer to me. If he is not too unworthy of you, I'll go; and trouble you no more. I have learned his name."

Mercy blushed; for she knew Paul Carrick would bear no comparison with George Neville.

The next day Sir George took leave to observe that this Paul Carrick did not seem to appreciate her preference so highly as he ought. "I understand he has never been here."

Mercy coloured, but made no reply: and Sir George was sorry he had taunted her. He followed her about, and showed her great attention, but not a word of love.

There were fine trout streams in the neighbourhood, and he busied himself fishing, and in the evening read aloud to Mercy, and waited to see Paul Carrick.

Paul never came; and from a word Mercy let drop, he saw that she was mortified. Then, being no tyro in love, he told her he had business in Lancaster, and must leave her for a few days. But he would return, and by that time perhaps Paul Carrick would be visible.

Now his main object was to try the effect of correspondence.

Every day he sent her a long love-letter from Lancaster.

Paul Carrick, who, in absenting himself for a time, had acted upon his sister's advice, rather than his own natural impulse, learned that Mercy received a letter every day. This was a thing unheard of in that parish.

So then Paul defied his sister's advice, and presented himself to Mercy; when the following dialogue took place.

"Welcome home, Mercy."

"Thank you, Paul."

"Well, I'm single still, lass."

"So I hear."

"I'm come to say let bygones be bygones."

"So be it," said Mercy, drily.

"You have tried a gentleman; now try a farrier."

"I have; and he did not stand the test."

"Anan."

"Why did you not come near me for ten days?"

Paul blushed up to the eyes. "Well," said he, "I'll tell you the truth. 'Twas our Jess advised me to leave you quiet just at first."

"Ay, ay. I was to be humbled, and made to smart for my fault; and then I should be thankful to take you. My lad, if ever you should be really in love, take a friend's advice; listen to your own heart, and not to shallow advisers. You have mortified a poor sorrowful creature, who was going to make a sacrifice for you; and you have lost her for ever."

"What d'ye mean?"

"I mean that you are to think no more of Mercy Vint."

"Then it is true, ye jade; ye've gotten a fresh lover already."

"Say no more than you know. If you were the only man on earth, I would not wed you, Paul Carrick."

Paul Carrick retired home, and blew up his sister; and told her that she had "gotten him the sack again."

The next day Sir George came back from Lancaster, and Mercy lowered her lashes for once at sight of him.

"Well," said he, "has this Carrick shown a sense of your goodness?"

"He has come,—and gone."

She then, with her usual frankness, told him what had passed. "And," said she, with a smile, "you are partly to blame; for how could I help comparing your behaviour to me with his? *You* came to my side when I was in trouble, and showed me respect when I expected scorn from all the world. A friend in need is a friend indeed."

"Reward me, reward me," said Sir George, gaily; "you know the way."

"Nay, but I am too much *your* friend," said Mercy.

"Be less my friend then, and more my darling."

He pressed her, he urged her, he stuck to her, he pestered her.

She snubbed, and evaded, and parried, and liked him all the better for his pestering her.

At last, one day, she said, "If Mrs. Gaunt thinks it will be for your happiness, I *will*—in six months' time; but you shall not marry in haste to repent at leisure. And I must have time to learn two things—whether you can be constant to a simple woman like me, and whether I can love again, as tenderly as you deserve to be loved."

All his endeavours to shake this determination were vain. Mercy Vint had a terrible deal of quiet resolution.

He retired to Cumberland, and, in a long letter, asked Mrs. Gaunt's advice. She replied characteristically. She began very soberly to say that she should be the last to advise a marriage between persons of different conditions in life. "But then," said she, "this Mercy is altogether an exception. If a flower grows on a dunghill, 'tis still a flower, and not a part of the dunghill. She has the essence of gentility, and indeed her *manners* are better bred than most of our ladies. There is too much affectation abroad, and that is your true vulgarity. Tack 'my lady' on to 'Mercy Vint,' and that dignified and quiet simplicity of hers will carry her with credit through every court in Europe. Then think of her virtues—(here the writer began to lose her temper)—where can you hope to find such another? she is a moral genius, and acts well, no

matter under what temptation, as surely as Claude and Raphael paint well. Why, sir, what do you seek in a wife? Wealth? title? family? But you possess them already; you want something in addition that will make you happy. Well, take that angelic goodness into your house, and you will find, by your own absolute happiness, how ill your neighbours have wived. For my part I see but one objection: the child. Well, if you are man enough to take the mother, I am woman enough to take the babe. In one word, he who has the sense to fall in love with such an angel, and has not the sense to marry it, if he can, is a fool."

"Postscript.—My poor friend, to what end think you I sent you down in the coach with her?"

Sir George, thus advised, acted as he would have done had the advice been just the opposite.

He sent Mercy a love-letter by every post, and he often received one in return; only his were passionate, and hers gentle and affectionate.

But one day came a letter that was a mere cry of distress.

"George; my child is dying. What shall I do?"

He mounted his horse, and rode to her.

He came too late. The little boy had died suddenly of croup, and was to be buried next morning.

The poor mother received him upstairs, and her grief was terrible. She clung sobbing to him, and could not be comforted. Yet she felt his coming. But a mother's anguish overpowered all.

Crushed by this fearful blow, her strength gave way for a time, and she clung to George Neville, and told him she had nothing left but him; and one day implored him not to die and leave her.

Sir George said all he could think of to comfort her; and at the end of a fortnight persuaded her to leave the "Packhorse" and England, as his wife.

She had little power to resist now; and indeed little inclination.

They were married by special licence, and spent a twelvemonth abroad.

At the end of that time they returned to Neville's Court, and Mercy took her place there with the same dignified simplicity that had adorned her in a humbler station.

Sir George had given her no lessons; but she had observed closely, for his sake; and being already well educated, and very quick and docile, she seldom made him blush except with pride.

They were the happiest pair in Cumberland. Her merciful nature now found a larger field for its exercise, and, backed by her husband's purse, she became the Lady Bountiful of the parish and the county.

The day after she reached Neville's Court came an exquisite letter to her from Mrs. Gaunt. She sent an affectionate reply.

But the Gaunts and the Nevilles did not meet in society.

Sir George Neville and Mrs. Gaunt, being both singularly brave and haughty people, rather despised this arrangement.

It seems that, one day, when they were all four in the Town Hall, folk whispered and looked; and both Griffith Gaunt and Lady Neville surprised these glances, and determined, by one impulse, it should never happen again. Hence it was quite understood that the Nevilles and the Gaunts were not to be asked to the same party or ball.

The wives, however, corresponded, and Lady Neville easily induced Mrs. Gaunt to co-operate with her in her benevolent acts, especially in saving young women, who had been betrayed, from sinking deeper.

Living a good many miles apart, Lady Neville could send her stray sheep to service near Mrs. Gaunt; and vice versa; and so, merciful, but discriminating, they saved many a poor girl who had been weak, not wicked.

So then, though they could not eat nor dance together in earthly mansions, they could do good together; and, methinks, in the eternal world, where years of social intercourse will prove less than cobwebs, these their joint acts of mercy will be links of a bright, strong chain, to bind their souls in everlasting amity,

It was a remarkable circumstance, that the one child of Lady Neville's unhappy marriage died, but her nine children by Sir George all grew to goodly men and women. That branch of the Nevilles became remarkable for high principle and good sense; and this they owe to Mercy Vint, and to Sir George's courage in marrying her. This Mercy was granddaughter to one of Cromwell's ironsides, and brought her rare personal merit into their house, and also the best blood of the old Puritans, than which there is no blood in Europe more rich in male courage, female chastity, and all the virtues.

THE END.

AGNES.

(AFTER OEHELENSCHLÄGER.)

I.

MAID AGNES musing sat alone
 Upon the lonely strand;
 The breaking waves sighed soft and low
 Upon the white sea sand.
 Watching the thin white foam that broke
 Upon the waves, sat she:
 When up a beauteous Merman rose,
 From the bottom of the sea.
 And he was clad unto the waist
 With scales like silver white,
 And on his breast the setting sun
 Put rosy gleams of light.

The Merman's spear a boat-mast was,
With crook of coral brown,
His shield was made of turtle-shells,
Of mussel-shells his crown.

His hair upon his shoulders fell,
Of bright and glittering tang,
And sweeter than the nightingale's
Sounded the song he sang.

"And tell to me, sweet Merman,
Fresh from the deep, deep sea,
When will a tender husband come
To woo and marry me."

"O hearken, sweetest Agnes,
To the words I say to thee,
All for the sake of my true heart,
Let me thy husband be!

"For underneath the deep, deep sea,
I reign in palace-halls,
And all around, of crystal clear,
Uprise the wondrous walls.

"And seven hundred handmaids wait,
To serve my slightest wish;
Above the waist like milk-white maids,
Below the waist like fish.

"Like mother-of-pearl the sea-sledge gleams,
Wherein I journey crowned,
Along the sweet green paths it goes,
Dragged by the great sea-hound.

"And all along the green, green deeps,
Grow flowers wondrous fair;
They drink the wave, and grow as tall
As those that breathe the air."

Fair Agnes smiled, and stretched her arms,
And leapt into the sea,
And down beneath the tall sea-trees
He led her tenderly.

II.

Eight happy years fair Agnes dwelt
Under the green sea wave;
And seven beauteous little ones
She to the Merman gave.

She sat beneath the tall sea-trees,
Upon a throne of shells,
And from the far-off land she heard
The sound of sweet kirk-bells.
Unto her gentle lord she stept,
And softly took his hand;
"And may I once, and only once,
Go say my prayers on land?"
"Then hearken, sweet wife Agnes,
To the words I say to thee;
Fail not, in twenty hours and four,
To hasten home to me."
A thousand times good-night she said
Unto her children small,
And ere she went away she stooped
And softly kissed them all.
And old and young the children wept,
As Agnes went away,
And loud as any cried the babe
Who in the cradle lay.
Now Agnes sees the sun again,
And steps upon the strand,
She trembles at the light, and hides
Her eyes with her white hand!
Among the folk she used to know,
As they walk to kirk, steps she;
"We know thee not, thou woman wild,
Come from a far countree."
The kirk-bells chime, and into kirk,
And up the aisle she flies,
The images upon the walls
Are turning away their eyes.
The silver chalice to her lips
She lifteth tremblinglie;
For that her lips were all athirst
Under the deep, deep sea.
She tried to pray, and could not pray,
And still the kirk-bells sound;
She spills the cup of holy wine
Upon the cold, cold ground.
When smoke and mist rose from the sea,
And it was dark on land,
She drew her robe about her face,
And stood upon the strand.

Then folded she her thin, thin hands,
The Merman's weary wife;
"Heaven help me, in my wickedness,
And take away my life."

She sank among the meadow grass,
As white and cold as snow;
The roses growing round about
Turned white and cold also.

The small birds sang upon the bough,
And their song was sad and deep;
"Now, Agnes, it is gloaming hour,
And thou art going to sleep."

All in the twilight, when the sun
Sank down behind the main,
Her hands were pressed upon her heart,
And her heart had broke in twain.

The waves crept up across the strand,
Sighing so mournfullie;
And tenderly they wash'd the corse
To the bottom of the sea.

Three days she stayed beneath the sea,
And then came back again;
And mournfully, so mournfully,
Upon the sand was lain.

And sweetly deck'd by tender hands,
She lay a-sleeping there,
And all her form was wreath'd with weeds,
And a flower is in her hair!

The little herd-boy drove his geese
Seaward at peep o'day;
And there, her hands upon her breast,
Sweet Agnes sleeping lay.

He dug a grave behind a stone,
All in the soft sea sand;
And there the maiden's bones are dry,
Though the waves creep up the strand:

Each morning and each evening
The salt tide wets the stone,
While sad and low across the sands
The sweet kirk-bells intone.

GEORGE ELIOT, AND POETRY.

SEVERAL years ago, a book, which I had lent, was returned to me, done up in a sheet of country newspaper. That sheet contained, among other miscellaneous quotations, a quotation from a book, the name of which was new to me—"Scenes and Stories of Clerical Life," by George Eliot. As all my copies of this author's books are lent, except two, I cannot quote the passage verbatim; but it came out of 'Janet's Repentance,' and it was something like this: "Often, I think, when we are coldly calling a man narrow, or latitudinarian, Anglican, or Evangelical, or too high or too low, that man is shedding hot tears in secret, because he cannot find the light or the strength that shall enable him to say the right word, or do the difficult deed." My recollection is that this was some long time after the publication of 'Adam Bede,'—which I had also not read. But now I immediately got 'Adam Bede' and the 'Scenes and Stories,' from Mudie's, and read them with strong and peculiar interest. In those "sallet" days—ah, ye gods, how green I was!—I used to write articles gratuitously about books that pleased me very much; because I had a vague but mastering fancy that it was base to receive money for saying anything about which I felt strongly. I have not yet lost the feeling, and should think it a happy, happy day which put it in my power to carry out my desire never to write for money. However, I wrote immediately some "free" papers about "George Eliot"—whom I took to be a clergyman—and expressed an opinion, which has since been verified, about the influence of this writer's novels in restoring a taste for *healthy* realism. You must know I had just been made ill by a course of Thackeray.

These early works of George Eliot had a lyrical freedom about them, which has, later on, given place to other characteristics; they had not much of that sub-acid "note" which you do not often miss for long in the more recent books of the same writer; and they had not—even 'Adam Bede' had not—that rapid, clinching, unfaltering vigour of *dialogue*, which, as it seems to me, comes to its climax in 'Felix Holt.' I mean dialogue in which the words spoken are like blows interchanged between ardent hitters, when every blow tells—dialogue in which the ball is really kept moving between the players, with resonance, with will, with clangour of passion, with accumulation of force, with unceasing antiphonal rhythm and echo. Now, the lyrical freedom, and the absence of the sub-acid note, were both favourable to the idea that this author might write poetry; but that idea never crossed my own mind till I read the 'Mill on the Floss.' I remember the passage which first suggested the notion—it is about the sunbeams and hyacinths—though I can't quote it, for the reason just given. Now this was only an instance of poetic *fancy*—it had nothing particular about it—it was not an instance of "imagination," in the sense in which Wordsworth uses that word,* nor do I know that George Eliot's writings contain a single example

* Of course, imagination belongs to *all* high capacity; but not "imagination" taken as Wordsworth takes it, as opposed to "fancy."

of such "imagination." But there was something about the little passage which made me pause. My thought was something like this:—"This writer seldom *stops* to gather flowers; but here is a case in which there really seems a half inclination to do it. Is it the index of a *restrained* power?" I concluded that no such matured power *could* be so uniformly restrained. "Is it the index of a *growing* power, which this writer may or may not choose to notice or to nurse?" I concluded that it was.

The characteristics I find in the writings of George Eliot are not those which some of the most admiring critics find; some of their words of admiration appear to me wholly misplaced. Why do I not specify? I'll tell you, sir. Because those whom I convinced would immediately think there was nothing in George Eliot at all—nothing; it would be impossible to fill up the vacancy left by the displaced ideas with new ones difficult of apprehension. Mr. Buchanan, in one of the most pathetic of his 'London Poems,' says—

"——— Our dear ones ever love dearest
Those parts of ourselves that we scorn——"

a very strong generalisation; but one that might, as to criticism, be translated into something *near* the truth!

I take this opportunity of saying that George Eliot is not the only writer with respect to whom I, for one, exercise a similar reticence. There are writers, with respect to whose high qualities the whole truth would be the most pernicious thing (so far as we can judge) that any one could possibly utter. Silence is always possible. If you think a writer, who is exercising a beneficial influence, is praised in the wrong place, you had better stop at expressing what is positive in your own opinions; you are by no means bound to analyze (even with an admiring pen) up to the point of your own capacity, the faculty of any one living. This is a hint for reviewers, who are too apt to put down all the clever things they can say about a book, heedless what pain they may cause, and what a misleading effect the whole "handful of truth" may have. Those of the powers of this writer, which I think it necessary to signalise, are—I. Perfect intelligence; II. Following that so rapidly as to appear synchronous, immense flexibility of sympathy; III. Perfect power of reproducing the surfaces of things; IV. A wonderful power of writing effective dialogue—a power which I confess I have not yet been quite successful in analyzing, though I see my way into it for some distance. For a moment we may leave it out of the account. But a writer who had the first three characteristics would be able to produce poetry, if something else were presupposed—namely, a temperament receptive of "the gleam"—the "consecration." That temperament belonging in a high degree to the author of the books before me, it was always "upon the cards," in my own mind, that George Eliot would write poetry some day—though I formed no opinion (nor have I now formed any) of the precise rank it would take.

In the opening paragraph of 'Silas Marner,' there was displayed in the writing that sensitiveness to congruity between the style and the thought, which is so highly essential to poetry; though there was not much of "the gleam." In 'Romola' there was both "the gleam" and "the consecration;" but there

was also something else, which made me again fancy that this author's intelligence would never find perfect expression in the form of the novel. With no shade of insensibility to the greatness of the gift, and without wishing it other than it is, now we have got it, I must adhere to the opinion which I formed at the first about 'Romola,' namely, that it should have been a tragedy; or, at least, a series of scenes, like 'Faust.' The story—the whole subject—was one for picture, passion, and dialogue; not for processional narration, illuminated by frequent criticism. That is my opinion; and I can no more alter it, than I can alter the opinion (which I share with some of the very best of living critics, and among them, I think, Mr. Lewes) that Mr. Tennyson's 'Maud' is, in spite of the exquisitely beautiful things it contains, a mistake. But 'Romola' had a proem, as we all know, and that proem certainly looked something like the prose of a person who wanted to *sing*, and yet wouldn't or couldn't. And I say that in spite of one or two things in it that were "indifferent honest," such as the combination "heart-strains."

It thus happened that—having a mind sensitive to the possibility—I once or twice had suspicions that poetry, which stood out in my memory, and which I could not identify as written by any one else, was the work of George Eliot; but I had, upon reflection, to set aside all such guesses. Chiefly, because, upon examining the prose of this writer, I could not find sufficiently decisive traces of melody—could not find any, or many, of those lapses into rhythm which poets who write prose cannot help—sweet equivocal passages, which may be read one way or the other, just as you please. Now, there are highly rhythmic writers—such as De Quincey and Ruskin—who could not, in my opinion, produce satisfactory poetry. But it seems so near an impossibility for a poet to write prose at all without rhythmic lapses, that I have always had a doubt *here* about George Eliot. Look at this sentence from 'Adam Bede,' book iv. chapter 33:—"The woods behind the chase, and all the hedgerow trees, took on a solemn splendour, under the dark, low-hanging skies." How the writer of this sentence could *help* dropping into complete rhythm is the question. Let us alter it a very little:—

The woods behind the chase,
And all the hedgerow trees,
Took on a solemn splendour now,
Under the dark, low-hanging skies.

This might still be read as prose; and yet the insertion of the word "now" makes it perfectly rhythmical. Again:—

The woods behind the chase,
And all the hedgerow trees,
Took on a silent solemn splendour,
Under the dark low-hanging skies.

Here the insertion of the word "silent" makes the passage rhythmical. I have used that word for the purpose, not because it has any particular force (it is simply harmless), but because it is *the* word which will give me just the requisite variety in vowel-sound. We will try again:—

The woods behind the chase,
And all the hedgerow trees,
Took on a solemn splendour,
Under the dark, low skies.

This (which omits the word "hanging") is not so satisfactory, either for prose or verse, as the other specimens; but it would pass. I only quote the passage as one out of hundreds (that might be selected from the writings of George Eliot), in which is suggested this dilemma:—Of two things one—this writer either does not easily slide into rhythmic movement of style; or so easily slides into it that the "skid" is deliberately put on.

The question, Will George Eliot contribute poetry to English literature? is necessarily raised by the evidently original blank-verse mottoes to some of the chapters in 'Felix Holt'—and would be almost raised, in any case, by the beautiful idyllic opening of the book; in which again we find exhibited that sense of congruity in style, which is rarely found in so high a degree without a share of the poetic faculty. The mottoes to the chapters I should, myself, guess to have been thrown off for the occasion, as it arose; but I will quote the greater part of them—putting in italics, not what I think good, but what I think bad:—

He left me when the down upon his lip
Lay like the shadow of a hovering kiss.
"Beautiful mother, do not grieve," he said;
"I will be great, and build our fortunes high,
And you shall wear the longest train at court,
And look so queenly, all the lords shall say,
'She is a royal changeling: there's some crown
Lacks the right head, since hers wears nought but braids.'" (a)
Oh, he is coming now—but I am grey:
And he———(Vol. i. p. 17.)

'Twas town, yet country too; you felt the warmth
Of clustering houses in the wintry time;
Supped with a friend, and went by lantern home.
Yet from your chamber window you could *hear*
The tiny bleat of new-yeaned lambs, *or see (b)*
The children bend beside the hedgerow banks
To pluck the primroses.—(Vol. i. p. 78.)

1ST CITIZEN. Sir, there's a hurry in the veins of youth
That makes a vice of virtue by excess.

2ND CITIZEN. What if the coolness of our tardier veins
Be loss of virtue?

1ST CITIZEN. All things cool with time—
The sun itself, they say, till heat shall find
A general level, nowhere in excess.

2ND CITIZEN. 'Tis a poor climax, to my weaker thought,
That future middlingness.—(Vol. i. p. 105.)

I'm sick at heart. The eye of day,
The insistent summer noon, *seems pitiless, (c)*
Shining in all the barren *crevices*
Of weary life, leaving no shade, no dark,
Where I may dream that hidden waters lie.—(Vol. iii. p. 185.)

Why, there are maidens of heroic touch,
 And yet they seem like things of gossamer
 You'd pinch the life out of, as out of moths.
 Oh, it is not loud tones and mouthiness,
 'Tis not the arms akimbo and large strides,
 That make a woman's force. The tiniest birds,
 With softest downy breasts, have passions in them
 And are brave with love.—(Vol. iii. p. 206.)

Nay, falter not—'tis an assured good
 To seek the noblest—'tis your only good
 Now you have seen it ; for that higher vision
 Poisons all meaner choice for evermore.—(Vol. iii. p. 249.)

Our finest hope is finest memory ;
 And those who love in age think youth is happy,
 Because it has a life to fill with love.—(Vol. iii. p. 280.)

And doubt shall be as lead upon the feet
 Of thy most anxious will.—(Vol. ii. p. 1.)

Her gentle looks shot arrows, piercing him
 As gods are pierced, with poison of sweet pity.—(Vol. ii. p. 104.)

The down we rest on in our æry dreams
 Has not been plucked from birds that live and smart :
 'Tis but warm snow, that melts not.—(Vol. iii. p. 64.)

He rates me as a merchant does the wares
He will not purchase—"Quality not high!" (d)
 'Twill lose its colour opened to the sun,
 Has no aroma, and, in fine, is naught—
I barter not for such commodities (e)
 There is no ratio betwixt sand and gems.
 'Tis wicked judgment ! for the soul can grow,
 As embryos, that live and move but blindly,
 Burst from the dark, emerge regenerate,
 And lead a life of vision and of choice.—(Vol. iii. p. 114.)

In the above extracts, at (a) I would point out that the line is thoroughly unmusical—difficult to read out loud, in fact. At (b) I would remark that a monotonous effect is produced by the way in which "hear" is made to end one line and "see" another: the final cæsura occurs in both cases at the verb. George Eliot must be as well aware as any of us, that this monotony of pause is the point in which blank-verse writers break down the most easily—and the repetition *may* even be intended in this case. I only note it as part of the general frankness of these comments. At (c) I find the strength of the image sacrificed by the use of the word "seems." There is also too much sibilation in these two lines—and "crevices" following "pitiless" is not good. At (d) and (e) I find the idea not expressed with adequate finish.

It seems absurd to make even such criticisms as these upon fragments of verse flung carelessly in, by so richly prolific a writer as George Eliot, who may know a great deal more about versification than I know; but I do it for the sake of those who think the writing of verse an easy matter. In one of his papers—that on the 'Prinzenraub,' I think—Mr. Carlyle says (in effect) that he had preferred hunting up the real history of the thing to writing a ballad about

it, which would have been much easier. Mr. Carlyle ought to have known better than to write such nonsense. The writing of verse that at all deserves the name, must ever be one of the most arduous and exhausting of human occupations. Another day I will say something of what I hold to be *the* characteristic fault of some of our recent poetry, speaking now of the versification only.

To return, however, and to sum up:—There was always, in my opinion, reason to apprehend that George Eliot might some day publish poetry. The fragments, which we all presume to be from her pen, in ‘Felix Holt,’ would arrest attention wherever they were found. It is in a high degree probable that George Eliot will some day contribute with victorious effect to the dramatic literature of England. That is my judgment.

We have not, meanwhile, the means of telling how far George Eliot is practised in versification. It must, however, be borne in mind, that one’s practice in versification is not, need not be, a thing conterminous with that other thing—practice in *writing verse*. Mr. Carlyle suggests, somewhere, *apropos* of Goethe, that there is no really musical writing without a content of true, wise thought. But this is quite wrong. Some of the most musical verses in the world were written almost for the express purpose of stultifying the idea! For example, the Laura Matilda parody in the ‘Rejected Addresses,’ and Pope’s

“Fluttering spread thy purple pinions.”

And, besides this, I question whether any human being, from the beginning of the world, ever wrote poetry who had not a mental habit of involuntary musical phrasing—a direct tendency to the use of words as sounds, and as sounds only—material for melody. Nor has any one tasted all the delight of poetry who does not find in himself a tendency to think of sweet passages as mere syllabic melody, without the smallest regard to the sense. As thus:—

Every valley green
Dingle or bushy dell of this wild wood
And every bosky bourn from side to side ;

or,

The huddling brook to hear his madrigal
And sweetened every musk rose of the dale ;

or,

In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos ;

or,

Delight the more and Siloa’s brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God ;

or,

While the gold lily blows and overhead
The light clouds moulders on the summer crag ;

or,

Illyrian woodland sechoing falls ;

or,

By dancing rivulets fed his flocks ;

or twenty millions of other such things.

And obviously a writer like George Eliot may have had great practice in versification—in involuntary musical phrasing—without having written a single poem. Of that we cannot judge at present. But two things are certain—first, that the writer who produced the beautiful episode of *Annette*, which is embedded in 'Felix Holt,' can conceive a story which has in it the concentrated essence of one of the two* kinds in which poetry is conceived; and, as to the rest, including the *form*, that a mind which has already shown itself so susceptible to re-impregnation of the most unexpected kind—which has self-consciousness so complete, and a power of self-discipline so peculiar, may have surprises in store for many of us. A mind in which, or, rather, in whose voluntary activity, intelligence takes precedence of sympathy (by however brief an interval) cannot produce what we have, most of us, agreed to call the highest order of poetry, but it may produce poetry of high rank in an order which is subsequent.

MATTHEW BROWNE.

BY THE SEA.

A STUDY.

I.

IT is a dull, cheerless day: a little gleam of sunlight in the morning, and then the sharp, clear twilight of a wintry afternoon, which has lasted ever since.

From my window I can see the thin line of surf rolling in from the wide grey sea upon the Norman coast. The sea looks solid and leaden; not a white sail is anywhere visible; the smoke of a steamer is just disappearing upon the horizon. That vessel is freighted with the hopes and joys of how many! It is bearing friend to friend, lover to lover, husband to wife.

Slowly I have begun to realize the greatness of my calamity; but the events of the last few months have left me too weak to shake off the load of trouble. Every day, every hour, I am re-living vividly the past; and each scene, as it flits and fades before me, leaves me oppressed with the dull heavy pain as of a deep incurable wound.

The desolate sea and sky seem to be my fit companions.

With this salt cool wind coming in from the main, and amid the absolute silence of all but the waves as they break upon the shore, I find a strange comfort in pouring forth alone the brief record of my irreparable loss.

It was a December [afternoon, dark and foggy in the ill-lighted streets of one of the London suburbs.* I was cold and hungry, and filled with a strange number of obstinate questionings. Was I going of my own free will? was I being drawn at the will of another? I cared not; right or wrong I could act no otherwise. Circumstances were to blame, I said, with that kind

* In the last resort there are only two possible forms of poetry—which I propose, some day, to make clear by analysis and illustration. But I do not mean the usual division into the dramatic and the lyrical.

of half-sincerity which is more delusive than a whole lie. "If thou hast led me into temptation, deliver me from evil." But I was blind, too blind to see the insincerity of the prayer. I was drifting, and I prayed and thought, as men pray and think when they are drifting.

Presently I turned down a dark street, and saw in the dim black fog a church at the end. As I approached, I was guided by the pleasant light in the parsonage window; a load was off my heart, and yet it was not without trepidation that I rang the bell.

It was five o'clock. L—— was not in. Mrs. L—— came to meet me, and brought me into the uncurtained drawing-room, where, however, there was a good fire and some comfortable furniture. They had just removed to their dreary new house, in their dreary new parish. I sat down—the fire dazzled me and I was cold, but a few minutes sufficed to unfreeze me—then I felt a languor stealing over me which I struggled against successfully. It seemed as if my mind was growing sluggish, and my senses about to get the uppermost; but with an effort I recovered my mental ascendancy.

She knelt down on the rug and stirred the fire. "Was she cold?" I asked. "Yes, it had been such a miserable day." And with the old childlike confidence, she gave me her small hand, with the delicate tapering fingers heavy with rings. I leant back in my chair; I did not dare to analyse my thoughts; I pitched my sense of ideal duty high up, and almost succeeded in abstracting myself as an actor from the time and place. I seemed like a third person taking cognizance of everything and part in nothing that was going on. So I kept calm and dispassionate, hardly sensible of the immense effort of control I was exercising over myself. I had often been with her; I did not hold her hand then for the first time; in our most intimate conversations, let me say confessions, I had never betrayed any undue emotion. We were both sailing under false colours; we both felt that the first burst of feeling would be like the firing of the first gun, and the beginning of the end. By a kind of instinct I dared not retain her hand for a second. She sat down on the sofa by the fire as I lay back in my chair, and we were both silent.

I can see her now as in a picture, leaning half forward with her hand upon the mantelpiece, and her head resting upon the back of it, dreamily looking into the fire; a light-blue jacket, open in front and trimmed with eider-down, took the graceful curve-lines of her shoulders, and floated about her slender waist; the muslin dress flowed beneath like a voluminous white cloud, and rising in front broke low upon the snowy neck and left it bare.

"What will you do in this place?" I said. "Will you go about amongst the poor, and teach in the schools; will you visit the people?"

"I hate it so; it is the greatest misery to visit these kind of people. I don't mind the poor, and the schools; but the middle classes, the shopkeepers—to be patronized by them, when they make themselves your equal, or superiors, and pat you on the back. I loathe them all!"

"Try another way," I said; "don't think of castes; keep your own dignity and position by all means; keep it insensibly if possible; but don't be always saying to yourself, 'I am in one class, these people in another; we never shall get on.'"

"But what am I to do? I hate their ways; and the clergyman's wife is always a butt, expected to be at the beck and call of everybody. I never know what to say; I am always afraid of their seeing how much I dislike them; and if I never go amongst them, then I am 'proud,' and 'stuck up,' and I fancy I am neglecting my duty."

"Suppose you tried to love them. Don't think of them as shopkeepers, think of them as human beings, with joys, and sorrows, and feelings, not so very unlike your own. Try to love them, that is the only way; love covers a multitude of sins; people are so grateful for even a little of it. That is the only solution I have ever found to the difficulty of castes and classes whose thoughts are not as our thoughts.

"When I came amongst the barbarians the barrier seemed impassable. 'We shall never get over this,' thought I. I saw before me, as a young curate, a miserable parochial prospect, sunken and grinding poverty, and, higher up, snobs and shopkeepers, with all their low dishonesties, and all their airs and graces, and without their H's. Such they appeared to me when I was an outsider. I went amongst them; I went to their marriage feasts, and their tea parties. I went to their homes when they were dying; I read the burial service over their dead; I went home in the mourning coach to comfort them; and explained the Bible to them over my watercresses and buttered toast. Many times I have nearly shed tears with them, sometimes quite; oftener still have I laughed and made merry with them; many warm affectionate squeezes have I had from the honest rough and ready hand; many true and noble hearts—how much truer and nobler than mine!—have I found where I expected to find less than nothing, or more than enough."

"I know what you say is true. Oh! what a comfort it must be to be able to feel so; but still a clergyman is different from a clergyman's wife. A clergyman's wife has not the same feelings of being a guide, of being looked up to, of being loved in a parish."

"Perhaps not, although I do not see why not; but I am only telling you how I solved my difficulties, or rather, how I attempted to solve them. The cases may not be quite parallel; we cannot help each other much; but some experiments are worth trying. Get out of yourself; leave off for a little time to think of what you would like or not like; share other people's joys and sorrows; even if you don't succeed all at once, try, and you will have gained something: you will find people's manners quite changed towards you when they think you are trying to get on with them; they will begin to try themselves; and when two people try to please each other, they do not often fail. Wonderfully true it is that 'Charity never faileth.'"

"How can I love people who make me shudder when they come into the room? One has a certain instinct which shrinks back; you cannot help that."

"No; you cannot make uncongenial people congenial; but what a victory is gained if two uncongenial people, who never can understand each other, are brought out of an almost natural state of hostility, to respect, and almost like each other!"

"Did you ever know of such a case?"

"Yes, I know people who for two years past I have been trying to get on with. We never shall get on. We are uncomfortable in each other's presence; miserable at conversation, always glad when it is over. But they are members of my congregation; my efforts at affability have been constant; and they, too, try very hard. The consequence is, that although neither of us succeed, we think of each other with kindness, and, I believe, real regard. Don't you feel—when you have made some effort, given comfort and relief to others, after an afternoon in the schools, after visiting your sick people, after deliberately sacrificing yourself—there has been a sweetness come out of the pain, the crushed sensibility has yielded a sudden and delicious fragrance? You go down to your house justified."

Her face lighted up for a moment, but became sad almost immediately.

"Yes," she said, wearily, lifting her eyes to mine with that look of strange sweet tenderness which I knew.

"But if," I continued, "you sit and mope in the house when you ought to go out, and if you brood over your own thoughts instead of shaking them off, you cannot feel justified. Half our ills come from our brooding over fancies and impulses, until fancies loom like phantoms, and impulses grow irresistible."

"I am always acting from impulse, I cannot help it, I have tried—oh, how often! it is of no use; I wish there were no impulses."

"Do not say so, how many people think you have no impulses worth speaking of? To be able to enjoy and to suffer intensely—is that nothing? only impulses must be kept in their right channels; impulses alone cannot make you happy; nothing but doing right. Stern self-control can make life happy, then impulse will be like sunshine on a gloomy day."

I was intrenching myself behind these admirable sentiments, but my tenure was becoming every moment more insecure: it was the old, old mistake—putting the sentiment for the thing.

"But one's impulses get mixed, the bad and the good melt into each other. The mind gets confused, right and wrong get confused—I don't always know what is right and wrong."

"Yes," said I, more thoughtfully, speaking to myself, or rather thinking out aloud; and this time there was no sentiment, nothing but the naked truth; "I think we do always know right and wrong if we want to know it; but we don't always want to know it."

I began to feel a relief in taking the veil from my innermost heart: a weakness confessed so often seems like a weakness atoned for. In some states the conscience so easily takes the sop. I had begun by confusing mine, and its hold over me was growing weaker every moment.

"Is it not dreadful?" she said. "I sometimes shrink from knowing what is right, for fear it should be right and I be wrong!"

"Like St. Augustine, we pray to heaven to be delivered from temptation, and almost fear lest heaven should grant our prayer."

"What is to be done then? Prayer! prayer!" she said, passionately; and the white fingers writhed and twisted and bruised themselves against the rings with suppressed emotion; "what is to be done when one can't pray?"

It was a terrible home-thrust, the cry of a wounded soul, it went on vibrating through my own like echoes in sepulchral vaults. There are times when you have no comfort for yourself, no comfort for any one else; when you dare not sham, when soul meets soul and truth leaps forth. Her eyes were fixed upon me, wide and tearless eyes. She was leaning forward a little, waiting my reply: "What is to be done when one can't pray?" The blind were leading the blind.

"Do not ask me," I said, "I cannot tell—God help us!"

There was a double knock, and presently L—— came in and greeted me warmly. We liked each other well; and, strange to say, I felt the break in a conversation, which was becoming every moment more absorbing, a positive relief. Out of the world of moods and feelings into the actual every-day world, and with that, curiously, the sensation of hunger returned, and I felt glad when dinner was announced.

How strange is real life in its sudden transitions: as we turn back over the pages of the days and the hours, the scenes pass before us again like a moving drama. Here a summer garden, there a wild sea black with storm clouds, here the sublime solitude, and there the frivolous crowd; in real life there is no attempt at congruity—things never happen as we expect them to happen—difficulties solve themselves but are seldom solved by us.

The dinner passed pleasantly enough; there was no constraint. That night happened to be a church night; a friend of L——'s soon joined us, who was to preach. It was a cold dark night; there was a dark court to cross. Mrs. L—— came down in a heavy silk, and a still heavier black velvet cloak, that draped her slender figure nearly to the ground. She looked cold and unhappy, and hung shivering on my arm as we crossed the court to go to the church. Again her picture is vividly impressed on my mind as she sat in her pew nestling in the thick silk, and sheltered but not warmed by the heavy velvet. In the prayers, as she knelt, I could sometimes hear the faintest sob; it might have been the cold, I cannot say: for once when I turned all was so calm on the pale, lovely face, calm and weary. I fear the service was not of much use to-night, to her at least; for when I made some casual remark about the sermon, she said, as she took my arm to recross the court, "I did not hear a word of it—I could not listen."

"Have you a headache?"

"Yes—a little."

She clung close to me and trembled so, I almost feared she would fall. The wind blew chill.

"You should not have come out to-night," I said, as I almost lifted her along: for she seemed to sink in the wind and darkness.

The clerical friend came in to tea, and, I am bound to say, spoke very sensibly about missions and missionary societies.

Presently she came down in blue and white and eider-down, and I could not choose but drift out of the conversation, and leaving the preacher to L——, found myself once more talking to her on the sofa. She seemed more herself again now.

"Don't go away to-night."

"I must," I said. And a pang shot through me, and I thought I would not sit there; but I could not move.

"I have hardly seen you at all."

There was something in the half-smothered and painful way in which the words were uttered, more than in the words themselves, which made me look up at her. I said, "Which is the most beautiful of all these poems?"

I held a volume of Tennyson in my hand; I opened it almost at random on the poem "Love and Duty;" and giving her the book, "That," I said, "is the best;" and leaning a little forward, I read:—

"Wait! my faith is large in Time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end:
Will some one say; then why not ill for good?
Why took ye not your pastime? To that man
My work shall answer, since I knew the right,
And did it."

"And do you remember after the fierce conflict," I continued, turning the leaf, "how the soul emerges from the lurid atmosphere of passion, purified by exquisite pain, into the clear calm glory? It is like coming up from an underground sulphur grotto to the outer world:—

"Then, when the first low matin chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driven her plow of pearl
For furrowing into light the mounded rack
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea!"

"Let us get out of sulphur caves," I said; "let us reach the fair green field and look out upon the eastern sea."

I hardly knew what I said—I was half talking to myself; speech was like a safety-valve to me at that moment; I was quite unconscious—quite careless of its effect upon her. There are moments in life when we are not sane.

The clerical friend soon left, and L—— proposed to me to smoke a pipe with him down-stairs. I would not smoke; he left me alone with Mrs. L——. He would leave her constantly for hours, not to say days. At night he would sit smoking in the kitchen, or playing chess somewhere else, and she would lie pale and tired upstairs in the drawing-room; and I too should have left her with her great thirst for love, her childlike longing to be taken care of.

"Does he smoke much now?" I said to her.

"Oh, hours," she answered. Again I found myself leaning back in my chair and looking into the fire; again I felt the feeling of languor steal over me, and I rose up and stood before the fire with one arm on the mantel-piece.

There was something unreal about that night—to this moment I cannot understand it—all that passed seemed to pass in a dream.

Again she was sitting on the low sofa drawn near to the fire, and as I turned towards her, I said, hardly knowing what I said—

"I must go, I must go!"

"Please!" she murmured, with that same imploring, irresistible sweetness which I knew so well, which made me not dare to look at her. My head was beginning to spin, I sat down again. In another moment I felt she

was by my side—I knew not how she came there—I was not looking at her, I was staring at the fire, trying to collect my thoughts.

“Oh, stay, stay,” she said; “why will you not stay?”

“I must not, I cannot,” I cried, springing up from my chair.

“Why?”

“Because you ask me to; because I value my peace of mind, and yours; because I am as weak as a child and as foolish; because I think I am going mad!”

“Oh!” she cried, “I have nothing to live for; all is so cold and dark; if I may not love, I do not want to live!”

I looked for one moment at the face full of abandon and anguish. She fell forwards like a dead thing, and threw her arms round me; for a moment her head lay motionless upon my breast. I never saw anything like the misery of that pale, passionate face; I could have burst out crying like a child, but this was no time to succumb; gently I took her in my arms, and half-supported her to the sofa.

“For God’s sake compose yourself, my dearest Mrs. L——,” I exclaimed. She sunk back upon the sofa, and I rushed out of the room and went down into the kitchen, where I found L—— quietly smoking his pipe.

“Sit down old fellow,” said he; “must you go to-night?”

“I’m afraid so, I’ve got business early at my place.” And after a little chat upon matters indifferent, we went upstairs. Mrs. L—— was still in the drawing-room, on the sofa just where I had left her; as we entered she rose with an effort feigning extreme fatigue; we parted as if nothing had happened, and I went out into the darkness of the cold December night.

II.

I was to lecture that night at my old parish; it was the last time I should lecture there. I had indeed left for some weeks, but still on this night the last link was to be broken. I arrived late—the room was crowded—I was greeted with a long and continued burst of applause as I walked towards the platform. I could not help feeling strangely moved. On all sides were faces that I knew, faces that for two years I had known and learned to love; every week I had seen the greater number of them together from my pulpit. There was hardly one unconnected in my mind with some word of exhortation, hardly one who had not in some way become associated with my private thoughts and feelings; and now I had left them, but I felt they were still my people, that I still in some sense belonged to them; many heads were reached forward to greet me, many hands sought my grasp. I felt the old thrill again, and yet I felt that I was no longer the man I had been amongst them; a blight had fallen upon me; there was life and energy, but it was the energy of an engine rushing down hill with the steam off. I felt it would be a trying night, how trying I did not then know. I was anxious not to lose force before I began, and so I ascended the platform. I looked down upon the mass of faces, again the cheering broke forth. I felt sad, but I knew that night I could speak to them perhaps as I had never spoken before. L—— just then caught my eye: he sat towards the end of the second row, and

beside him, in the corner, there was another; the same stiff silk dress, the same heavy velvet cloak, the same pale face half hidden in the black lace veil. For a moment the faces before me swam, but in another I had recovered my self-possession. The dramatic soul of oratory seemed to kindle, strange and conflicting emotions were struggling together within me; I felt as if I had taken the strongest stimulants. My real life floated away like a shadow. I was living only in the creation of the moment. The subject was the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century; and as the impassioned harmonies of verse rolled forth, I felt they were bearing me along with them. The attention of the room was rapt—the eyes of all were fixed—that infallible sign of interest so well known to the orator. Once only, in a pause, my eyes strayed to one form nestled in the corner, and apparently unconscious of all around her. The face was half hidden, one hand was raised to the forehead, and seemed to press heavily upon the eyes; a wild feeling came upon me; the sweet pale face mingled with my dreams, and lent me a deep and passionate utterance. For two hours I spoke with intense nervous energy, and when at the end of that time I sat down exhausted, the long pent-up applause broke forth, and the same feeling of sadness came over me, and then I seemed to be alone, sitting there in my chair, hearing, seeing nothing. I was soon roused from my ill-timed abstraction. There were many last words; every one must be shaken hands with. And all the while one large emotion was ready to break in upon me; I kept it off, the affection of all around me for the time had sway. For a few moments I was able to banish the one for the many. Rough faces melted into tears. Some could hardly speak. Others did not attempt to, only the affectionate warm grasp was eloquent. I made my way into the cool night air; others were waiting there for me; they could not see me in the crowd upstairs. Perhaps I am exaggerating what passed; perhaps I felt it all the more keenly owing to my very shaken and excited state of mind that evening. So many emotions had met, and clashed, and mingled in the course of the last few hours, that when I felt myself out in the open air, and had made my last adieus, I believe a child might have led me.

At this moment a hand was laid upon my shoulder. It was L——'s.

"Come home with us, and have some supper, old fellow."

Mrs L—— was near me in the darkness, she laid her hand upon my arm, and whispered a few words of entreaty. I started; the whisper went through me; it was my fate. I went with them. It was arranged I was to sleep there that night.

"Mrs. L—— has determined you shall," said my friend; "and has prepared your room herself."

I had enough force left to make up my mind not to stay. The sudden irreflective instincts as often lead us right as wrong. I was rapidly losing all my own principles of cool reasoning, and adopting those impulsive methods of action which I had insensibly caught from her.

There were others at supper; there was loud laughing and talking. L—— was prodigal of his fine champagne. I was exhausted, but could not eat; I drank a glass of sherry; I joined in the conversation with a kind of desperate energy. At the top of the table she sat, pale and smiling. I hardly dared to

look at her, yet I felt her eyes sought mine. She was sitting with her back to the fire; the fire was too hot; she would sit by the side of the table. The gentleman next me rose to make room for her, and this placed her by my side. I believe I was laughing and talking loudly with L—. She said something to me in undertones; I answered shortly, and turned away. I could not help hearing the sigh; my heart smote me, and again I looked round, and met her eyes—full, large, wild eyes, and yet calm with a certain utter abandonment of despair. Thought and passion flitted over the face like cloud-shadows chasing each other across some windy upland. Was it possible that no one else perceived it? could any one else have perceived it? I think not. I think the perception of such movements depends on the relation of souls; they see and feel each other; they mingle when those around them see no change.

Oh what a world of woe! What a world of deep unfathomable love! Oh, poor little bird, breaking thy feathers, and dashing thyself to pieces against the iron bars of circumstance! For a moment our hands met, and were clasped convulsively; a shudder ran through her limbs. Utter recklessness of self. And again the laughter and noise of voices broke in upon the feverish dream, and the lights seemed to glare more wildly, and she turned round to smile upon some one else. They offered her some cold chicken; she pretended to eat it, but she could take nothing. I knew she was suffering from extreme exhaustion, and poured her out a glass of wine.

"Take it. It will be best for you."

"Will it?" she said, and took the glass from my hands with passive obedience.

The guests were gone. I was alone with her in the drawing-room. She made one more earnest attempt to detain me that evening. She was standing on the rug close by me; her face wore that look of exquisite sensibility which I dared not meet, and yet could not avoid. I had never seen her so bewilderingly lovely.

"Stay, now," she said.

"You should have let me go before," I cried. "I cannot; I will not come here to make you unhappy."

"If you knew how unhappy I was you could not leave me."

"Impossible; it must not be."

"Never?—half a loaf is better than none." Her words were passionate, but her quietness startled me. She seemed pale and cool, like one who had made up her mind and was resolved to do and dare everything. I turned from her.

"You are so weak and shaken," I cried, "you know not what you say!" I moved towards the door. In one moment her sweetness and gentleness forsook her. She seized my arm almost fiercely.

"Oh hard! hard!" she murmured in a kind of weird undertone of misery, and then almost instantly came a passionate revulsion of shame and disappointment; her grasp suddenly relaxed; her bosom swelled with a great convulsive sob; she threw herself upon the sofa, and hid her face amongst the cushions.

III.

I sat alone in my room thinking—and thinking, with that kind of cool analysis of self which so often follows a mood of over-wrought passion. I

had not drawn her, I said, by my will, we had been drawn to each other; neither had dreamt of resistance until it was too late. So I thought then, so I kept repeating to myself afterwards. I know it was a lie; from the first moment I saw her I had felt a strange irresistible spell, yet I might have resisted it; not with her, but away from her. I did not choose to resist.

And now, could she ever be mine? Then a vision of utter ruin rose before me: ruin to both of us, ruin within and without, ruin irrevocable, and why? Because society said nay, because the voice of morality said nay, because our Christianity said nay. Yet is not the law of love wider, deeper, than our conventions, our small moralities, our garbled interpretations of divine law itself? "Forasmuch as these two have consented together," is not that and no other the real foundation of marriage? "Ay; but relax the code and you open the floodgates," whispered Reason and Common-sense. "I know not," cried Passion; "in particular cases I may see my way; I deal not now with generalities; say what you will, our modern laws and our modern Christianity are powerless to grasp some cases." "And yet," said Reason, "to rebel against these is ruin; it must not be, for her sake, it must not be. We have to deal with things as they are." There are but two ways. We may be one with misery and sorrow, one with a blighted life and ruined hopes, with the fever of passion and the curse of crime,

"With the brief madness and the long despair,"

or—parted for ever. Such was the choice we had to make; no middle way—no reconciliation—no balm in Gilead. And all this I had to think for her, for she thought it not: she could not think it for herself.

An almost light-headedness stole over me as I sat before my smouldering fire; I fancied her sitting on my sofa, still pale and beautiful, but wearing a sweet smile of contented happy love. She was my wife—my pure and beautiful one. No cloud rested between us, she had never been another's. She was mine without remorse; all the past was an evil dream; my brightest destiny, her most passionate longing—all—all was fulfilled. She gave me energy to work, she recruited me when weary; days glided by, I lived, I breathed not without her; the white arms woven about my neck, the soft happy eyes filling with delicious tears—but wild no more. Years glided by, still the same, ever the same, time brought no change; down into the valley of the shadow of death, hand in hand, divided not; beyond the resurrection day, far into the dim eternity—together—bathed in immeasurable peace.

How long this wild disordered dream lasted I cannot tell; when I roused myself it was all dark—the lamp was out—my hands and feet were numbed with cold—my head was burning hot; I dragged myself to bed and, from sheer exhaustion, sank into a deep sleep.

IV.

Some days passed, and I heard and saw nothing of her; I went about my duties in a sleep-waking state, repeating phrases which had lost their meaning for me. All the world was an outside show; all offices of religion were vain and empty ceremonies; all the men and women I met were shadows, part of the unreal life.

In the great wreck of human passions the love of God goes out; prayer became to me a thin mockery. And yet I did not quite despair of help, coming through prayer—help to see, help to act. It was at best, however, but a half-unconscious cry, no sooner uttered than repeated.

In the dusk I walked out by the river side. The mist drove across, and the lights gleamed through and glittered in the dark rolling tide. And as I walked, without attempting to guide or rule my thoughts, my thoughts seemed to clear themselves. Again, as on that wretched night, the two alternatives rose strongly before me. I might either take her away from her husband and leave the world to rave and God to judge me, or I might desert her in the loveless wilderness of her own home. Her love would never find its earthly close; she would sit down by and by amidst the ruins, and learn to grow content and commonplace, with little joys and sorrows, all the great flower of her life unblown, all the sweetness never to come forth. I resolved it should be so, she should have not the greater but the less misery, not the ruin and despair, but the long suffering and the low content.

What a waste there is in this life! waste of thought, waste of feeling, waste of everything. Surely in the next there must be some atonement. Thoughts that struggled here for utterance will there come forth with power; hearts that yearned for love will there be satisfied. Souls, between whom there now washes a silent unnavigable sea, will there rush together.

V.

On my table I found a letter. No more passion, no more grief—all suppressed—suppressed with a kind of desperate, forlorn hope, just as we sometimes suppress our own emotions to spare another's; just as we smile half madly when the heart is breaking.

"Anything, anything to save her love.—She could not believe it hopeless, she was content to live, so only she might keep the shadow of affection. Let her believe I was her friend still—her best friend. In spite of myself, I ever must be that.—When would I come and see her? She had been wild; she had lost herself; she would never lose herself again.—If I would come she would be so good, not selfish any more."

My eyes grew dim with tears, but my resolution even then swerved not.

"Living in the future; living in the future!" those were her words.

VI.

In an hour I might be with her. I knew that L—— was away; I should find her alone. Her shawl was lying on my sofa, she had lent it me one night when I left in the rain. It was a thick woollen shawl, the sight of it brought back a thousand recollections. I was walking up and down my room restless; I had not slept the night before; my hand was clenched, her letter was crumpled up in it.

"Why was she not here?" I kept thinking. "If she knew how I longed for her she would come; drawn by a spell; she would come to me from the distance." And desperately I set myself to will that she might come. I was all unhinged again;—I threw myself on the sofa, and burying my head in the heavy folds of her woollen shawl, fancied I could see her in the dark.

A fierce inward debate was going on. Demons and angels were striving for the victory, and yet through it all God never left me. He was planning to save me, to save her, when both of us were insane.

I rose up suddenly—the demons had conquered—the voice of the angels was drowned—my heart was filled with one overflowing impulse.

"I cannot bear it," I cried. "I must—I will—go to her." Then I refolded the soft shawl to take back to her. I was going out immediately, when there came a gentle tap at the door. I started; my nerves were strung up to the highest pitch with a desperate resolve. Was this she? I smiled at my own folly. The servant opened the door. I had been sent for, but not by her.

A person was dying in my district and wished to see the minister.

"I will come in a moment," said I. The door closed; the shawl fell from my hands; the grim satire of life stared me in the face. For me to pray beside the dying who dared not face my God—who was even then going whither he had said "Thou shalt not go down." Truly He had met me in a narrow way.

Like one who has heard of the death of a dear friend, and will not realise it, but goes out into the street, or into the fields, to put a little space between him and his sorrow, so there came this pause to me; and mechanically I went out into my district to do the work of the priest.

Down a narrow alley I came to a house: there was no number on the door. On a miserable pallet, with scarcely a rag to cover him, lay a man gasping for breath; the death-film upon his half-opened eyes; the heavy beads of cold sweat upon his brow; the arms were paralysed and cold; two half-naked children were crying at the foot of the bed. The wife was evidently feigning a decent sorrow, which was all the more easy as she happened to be in drink. A few neighbours had come in out of curiosity to see the end.

With heart unmoved, but with the mechanical unction which comes so naturally—too naturally to one familiar with such scenes—I spoke the usual words of kindness and sympathy.

What I prayed I know not, yet we all kneeled down beside the insensible body, and I did pray for some minutes.

When I arose a strange feeling came over me; the experiences of an hour ago seemed untrue; the passion which raged, the thoughts that burned, were all gone. I felt the same in that moment as I had felt before my great sinful love.

The feeling soon wore off, but it had diverted the headstrong current of impulse. I was not going to her now. Somehow, I felt I could not go; not that I really desired to uproot my love; nay, I had not the power to do so, I only felt utterly wretched—felt that I loved her as passionately as ever, and yet could not go to her.

VII.

In the evening I sat down and wrote: my steady purpose had slowly returned. I may not have written as I ought to have written; I may not have spared her. The thought that she would share my agony consoled me; the most unselfish love is so hideously selfish! Would she have wished to be

spared this? I know she would not. It was better so. Any other words would have breathed a treachery on our love, and that, if any, was strong, was true; if it must be sacrificed, it should never be sullied by affected coldness, by a lie.

I was alone in my study; there was a green shade on the lamp; it shed a soft subdued light through the room. There were notes of sermons lying on the table, a tract or two on my desk; there was also a small piece of perfumed ribbon of the kind one burns to make a scented flame. I had taken it from her work-box one afternoon, quite in the early days. I took it up now; it smelt very sweet; with it there seemed to come a rush of the old fresh, sinless, feeling of the very early days; it brought back her ringing laugh, and the sunshine in her drawing-room.

I took up a pen and wrote to her. I said, "I should never see her again, because I loved her better than everything in life. I did not leave her because I feared God, because I feared to sin; I did not fear God and I had sinned in thought. I left her because I loved her, because I believed her life might be tolerable without me, not with me; I could not talk religion to her, or ask her to believe and pray when I could not believe and pray myself. I was so miserable I could not write any more."

I read over what I had written—there seemed to be great heavy sobs between the sentences, they were so broken and incoherent. I thought it would pain her so and tore it up. For a moment the idea of rushing to her came back upon me: there was only an hour between us. I went to my window and opened it,—the moon was rising on the Thames,—everything was very still. Then I sat down and wrote very nearly the same words over again, and the letter was posted that night.

VIII.

The next day a note was brought to me; I knew the handwriting, and, with trembling fingers, tore open the seal. It was written from her bed in pencil, and sometimes very indistinct. "My letter had stunned her—she had sat for an hour with it in her hand, thinking, almost lightheaded—She could not realise it, yet she knew what I had done was right and for the best.—She could not feel it to be so, she would try, it was all that was now left her; and, perhaps, after long pain and weariness and lowliness, God would help her. She was utterly desolate, shaken, ill,—longing only to rush away from all sights and sounds, and be alone and moan out her life in the dark." A mist of tears rose and dimmed the trembling letters; but dashing them away, I turned the leaf—there was no more—the note began and ended abruptly without date, without signature: it was like the sharp short cry of a wild animal wounded in the woods at night. It filled me with a longing so intense to be with her, that to this hour I wonder what power it was that restrained me.

At nine o'clock that same night I stood on the pier at Dover. The fire from the steamer smote upon the surf; the wind blew the briny spray into my face. It seemed to relieve my hot aching head. It was very dark. I could see the storm lights flash along the coast—

* * * * *

J. EDWARD KNIGHT.

THE LEAD-MELTING.

TWAS clear, cold, starry, silver night,
 And the old year was a-dying;
 Three pretty girls with melted lead
 Sat gaily fortune-trying.
 They dropt the lead in water clear,
 With blushing palpitations,
 And, as it hissed, with fearful hearts
 They sought its revelations.

In the deep night, while all around
 The snow is whitely falling;
 Each pretty girl looks down to find
 Her future husband's calling.
 The eldest sees a castle bright,
 Girt round by shrubland shady;
 And, blushing bright, she feels in thought
 A lady rich already.

The second sees a silver ship,
 And bright and glad her face is;
 O, she will have a skipper bold,
 Grown rich in foreign places!
 The younger sees a glittering crown,
 And starts in consternation;
 For Molly is, too meek to dream
 Of reaching regal station.

And time went by, one maiden got
 Her landsman, one her sailor—
 The Lackey of a country count,
 The Skipper of a whaler!
 And Molly has her crown, although
 She unto few can show it—
 Her crown is true-love fancy-wrought,
 Her husband, a poor Poet!

ROBERT BUCHANAN.





"THE LEAD MELTING."



MISS MARY WELSH

MRS. LAWRIE'S LITTLE DINNER PARTY, AND WHY IT FAILED.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN BEQUEST."

I FIND it upon record that on Tuesday, the 13th February, 18—, I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Lawrie. It was Mrs. Lawrie's first little dinner; her entertainments having till lately been limited to suppers, at which smoking, as a mark of a philosophical, unconventional order of things, was not only allowed, but expected.

Mrs. Watson has heard—what is there connected with her neighbours' doings, that Mrs. Watson does not contrive to hear?—that the Lawries are going to have "a regular dinner party." This intelligence makes Mrs. Watson uneasy, as she has a tender regard for the Lawries, poor things—hopes that they "will do"—doubts it, however—fears that Mr. Lawrie is literary, and that kind of thing, which Mr. Watson says—and surely Mr. Watson knows, if anybody does—is against business. Then, as to the Lawries giving a regular dinner party, she must say—well, she won't say—but young people must take care not to begin at the wrong end.

When Mrs. Watson has ascertained, therefore, that the party is not to be "a regular dinner," but only "a few friends in a quiet way," it is a relief to her. "*Quite* as much as they ought to attempt," she observes to her husband. "Do you know who is to be there, William?—they'll be thinking of asking *us*, I suppose." William does not know, and if he did, he would say that he did not, for the minuteness of his wife's curiosity about the sayings and doings of her neighbours fatigues his mind, occupied with grave affairs of business. He knows that his wife is frivolous and a gossip; but this does not make him unhappy, as he believes that women are, intellectually, all alike. A woman, he holds, is a miserably inferior animal, knowing nothing of law or exchanges, keeping her accounts—which never come right—without a debit and a credit side—occupied wholly, when pretty, with bonnets and ribbons, when plain, with missions and sermons. They differ, of course, in having good tempers and bad; but, intellectually, womankind is a monotonous level.

"They'll be thinking of asking *us*, I suppose," reiterated Mrs. Watson; the emphasis upon the "*us*" meaning that she intended to regard her acceptance of the invitation rather as a piece of condescension on her part. This is what was on the surface of her mind; a few inches down, however, there existed a little anxiety as to whether or not she would be invited. She is always glad to go anywhere, or to do anything, which affords her the happiness of seeing people, and comparing the dress, ornaments, and other accessories of other women with her own. She does not care for a dress or an ornament because it is a beautiful thing, but because it is a showy one—a certificate of a power of spending money in excess of her neighbours.

Then, though she has not yet acknowledged the fact to herself, she has

recently begun to have a little respect for the Lawries, or, in other words, to be a little jealous of them; for the two are the same, so far as Mrs. Watson is concerned. She has got a new light lately. Having spent her youth in a country town, writers of books had hitherto appeared to her as dreamy, mystic beings, who lived in London, in a kind of unintelligible social status; but on hearing that Mr. Lawrie's work, 'From Mollusc to Man,' has been reviewed in the *Times*, and that a certain worldly dignity is accruing to the author, she has begun to be fond of mentioning his name as a young friend of Mr. Watson's—one whom he has been kind to, and instrumental in bringing forward. She did not buy a copy of the work (for, though in some respects lavish in her expenditure, in others she exercises a wise economy), but she borrowed one, and read it through in a couple of hours, quite untroubled by the shadow of a suspicion that she was not understanding a single word of it; on the contrary, she was of opinion that she found it "extremely clever." Hearing, however, from unquestionable authority, that the work is of more than questionable orthodoxy, she now takes care, in expressing her appreciation of its ability, to add that "of course she does not agree with its views."

Its learned author is at present in his study, just finishing the fifth chapter of his new work—'The Philosophy of Superstition.' Taking advantage of an opening afforded by his according to himself the indulgence of a pipe, Mrs. Lawrie requests to be informed if she is to ask the Watsons on the 13th.

"Oh, by all means," says James, curtly, as if the subject were unworthy of attention. "By all means; and, as I was saying to you, Jane, you will find that just as a man's nature and education demonstrate to him the universal existence of law, moral and physical law," &c.

Now Mrs. Lawrie is fortunate in possessing that essential basis of matrimonial happiness—a respect for her husband's intellect; and it is at all times a pleasure and a pride to her to think that she is united to a recognized Higher Intelligence. There can be no doubt that she is very proud of James and she has striven hard to persuade herself that she at all times prefers to hear him deliver a philosophic monologue, to conversation of a more sublunary character. Had his perceptions been acuter, or his self-occupation less, he would probably frequently have detected in her vacant eye, or in the drooping corners of her mouth, proof of the fact that, all unacknowledged to self, Jane was being dreadfully bored—that she was longing for a little gossip, or to enter upon the question of a new dress, or perhaps to yawn and go to bed. The question of whether or not the Watsons were to be asked for the 13th, had, however, so often been started and dismissed without reply, that this time Mrs. Lawrie was resolved that it should be settled. In the interval afforded by a puff, she affected to conclude that the lecture had come to a natural end. "Then you really think that we should ask the Watsons," she resumed.

"By all means; and I'll tell you what," said James—his expression indicating that a humorous thought had struck him—"send her in to dinner with M'Cloud."

"With *Professor* M'Cloud—James!"

"Tell M'Cloud that she is a very learned woman, deep in German philosophy, but modest regarding her acquirements; and I'll bet twopence that he will never find out that you have been hoaxing him. All that M'Cloud wants is a good listening post." This, by the way, is exactly what M'Cloud says of Lawrie.

But Mrs. Lawrie does not see the joke. She has no sense of humour; few women have. She has no keen perception or relish of incongruity of character. All that she perceives, in the present case, is inequality of recognized intellectual status. "Besides," continues James, "Watson may be affronted, if we don't ask him; and it won't do to affront him."

"Why not, dearest?"

"Why not? Because he is rich."

"Surely, James, you do not respect a mere money-making machine?"

"Oh, don't I. Besides, I am inclined to think that you undervalue Watson."

"Why, how often have I heard you call him an ass?"

James very frequently *had* called Watson an ass; but he was too much a man of genius to be tied down to his words in this way.

"Perhaps I have," he replied; "but I begin to think that there is more in him than I was aware of. I sat beside him at Hill's, the other day, at dinner, and do you know I was astonished to find that he had read—and liked it—my book, 'From Mollusc to Man,' which shows that one should never judge any one hastily. We had a long and interesting chat on the continuity-of-species question. I found him really very intelligent. A very good conversationist indeed." The truth of the matter here is, that Mr. Lawrie had prosed upon his favourite subject for an hour to Mr. Watson, who had not comprehended a single word of the whole harangue, but had kept saying, at judicious intervals—"Ah—indeed." "Very curious"—and by this simple means he had acquired a high character with James as a conversationist. "Yes, really a very good talker indeed," he continued; "pursues his subject; does not shatter the conversation in the kind of way that so many men do."

As Mrs. Lawrie still had an objection to asking the Watsons, but did not quite understand the nature of it herself, it may be as well to help her to a fuller comprehension of her own sentiments and motives.

When we first became acquainted with Mrs. Watson, I adverted to an awkward habit which she has of eying and spying at everything. I have heard some of my lady friends objecting to a custom which she has, of perceptibly making an inventory of their articles of dress, every time that they meet her. Now, it requires a certain amount of moral fortitude, which even Higher Intelligences—especially when they are Higher female Intelligences—do not always possess, to contemplate, with unshaken nerve, the entertainment of even an inferior being, who will come in a silk dress—which dress, O mystery of feminine tactics! she is actually *never seen to wear again*, to the dismay and confusion of all pecuniary foes—about equal in value to your dining-room furniture. Nor is the irritation likely to be lessened when you know that the gorgeous being, fancying itself unobserved, will examine your

spoons, to see whether or not they have the lion stamped upon them; that it will surreptitiously lift your bronze ornaments, to ascertain whether or not they are real; and, should it feel unable to come to a sound conclusion with regard to your epergne, will not hesitate to end its doubts, by taking the honest and straightforward plan of asking you whether or not it is sterling or electro-plate. I love these frank and ingenuous natures.

It was an unacknowledged appreciation of these drawbacks to her enjoyment of Mrs. Watson's society, which stood in the way of Mrs. Lawrie's asking her to her party. However, it was settled that, on the whole, it would be best to ask the Watsons, and "get them over." "*She is an ass, I grant you,*" said Lawrie, at the conclusion of the discussion, "an underbred idiot, and I am always ashamed to find myself in the same room with her; still, she must come, and she will be more tolerable along with sensible people than with her own asinine set." To think that a woman, who could spend as much money as Mrs. Watson, should be talked of in this way behind her back!

I have known a great many men and women—especially women—who are very quiet and sensible in their demeanour and conversation, in the company of those with whom they are at ease and familiar, but to whom the entrance of even one stranger seems to bring with it a demon, that instantly takes possession of them. To this class belongs my friend Mrs. Lawrie. When I go of an evening to smoke a pipe with Lawrie, I find his dear Jane a very pleasant and intelligent woman, indeed. A good deal of innocent vanity about her at all times, no doubt. Still, seen in this quiet way, she is really very nice and intelligent. She quite understood me the other evening, when I explained to her the outs and ins of the Trevia turnpike case; and it was really quite wonderful how she comprehended my explanations of the legal points involved.

Were I always the greatest man in Mrs. Lawrie's company, I believe that I should always be pleased with her; but the unfortunate thing about her is, that she can be agreeable to only one man at a time, and that at the expense of mortifying the self-love of all the rest. It turned out just as I expected. Mrs. Lawrie's little party *was* a dreary business.

It would be a happy arrangement for Mrs. Lawrie, if, when she has invited a number of swans, a flock of geese could borrow their feathers, and come in place of them. The cackling, under the authority of showy plumage, would, I think, be just what would suit her.

Her company has been got together upon radically wrong principles. There is M'Cloud—"the celebrated Professor M'Cloud," as she loves to call him—who has just brought out his great work, which has occupied him happily for the last thirty years of his life; its object being to prove that the human will is both free and ruled by necessity; that is to say, that it must go east; but that it may go west, if it chooses. He being the greatest intellectual luminary present, it is Mrs. Lawrie's painfully perceptible ambition that he should let his beams fall full upon her; and the rest of the company is expected to derive pleasure and entertainment, not from the luminary itself, but from contemplating the orb "*Jane Lawrie*" as lighted up by it. The Professor, however, is in a taciturn humour to-night. He says he has the toothache; and perhaps

His mind is lost in pondering as to whether pain, as proceeding from the nerve of a tooth by the law of causal necessity, is incompatible with the entire freedom of the "Ego;" and its moral dignity as involved in this, or, possibly the twinge in his jaw, may be suggesting a doubt, which has never before occurred to him, as to the conclusiveness of his demonstration of the great, old, stoical doctrine, that "pain is no evil." He is ready to defy Aristotle himself to detect a flaw in his logic; but still the unhappy fact remains that he is *not* enjoying his curried lobster, and he *feels* this to be "an evil." He does not, of course, to himself intellectually admit it to be so, but his great mind is perplexed. So we are debarred from enjoying the spectacle of the learned gentleman wandering about among the clouds, and trying to compress them into his pockets. I have a profane belief that he is no nearer the execution of this feat than forty years ago, when he began to try it.

The greater light being under a cloud, Mrs. Lawrie revolves in the direction of the next greatest. Here she is more successful. The commentator upon Shakespeare blazes full down upon her; and during the third and fourth courses the conversation turns upon "whether the dramatic or the idyllic element prevails in 'Hamlet.' Fancy hungry mortals, who have been kept waiting an hour for their dinner—morbidly conscious of legs and arms during that painful delay—being expected to talk or listen to philosophy over their roast beef and sherry. Meanwhile, the hostess is comically blind to the fact that some of her guests are swelling with rage, while others of weaker minds are being reduced to an almost idiotic condition. Mrs. Watson had come prepared to do her best—for the woman is not devoid of good nature—and, as a giver of parties herself, she thoroughly understands the difference between a success and a failure. She had been flattered, too, and put into a good humour by having the great man allotted to her. On Mrs. Lawrie's repulse, she had generously come to the rescue, and had womanfully done her best to open up the Professor, by bringing a brisk battery of questions as to his tastes, ways, and habits, to bear upon him; but, whether from toothache or not, he is obdurate to-night. The battery slackens fire, and is before long reduced to silence. And I suspect that when Mrs. Watson takes off her wreath of smiles, as she enters her carriage to-night, she will afford herself the luxury of voting the Professor an old stick.

Yes, I fear it was a failure. As already hinted, we had been kept waiting dinner for nearly an hour, and when it did come it was cold. Nothing puts men into a worse humour than a spoilt dinner. Then the company was bored by harangues, mortifying to the vanity of one section of it, and ludicrously out of place in the eyes of another. What people want is to be allowed to eat in comfort, just doing a little pleasant and easy chat about novels, and the weather, and so on.

We may depend upon it that the man who wears either his heart or his brain upon his sleeve, for daws to peck at, is shallow, and that "the deep are dumb." He may be very learned. He may be profound in Greek roots, or deeply read in philosophy; but, infallibly, he is not possessed of common sense. Certainly he cannot possess that often painful, but always useful faculty, that of seeing what is passing in the minds of others. That women like to hear

men talk is, I suppose, the reason why many of them remain all their lives blind to a fact which stares them in the face every day: that is, that no man ever cares to hear another talk except for the anticipated pleasure of giving him a reply. A vital recognition of this fact is the grand principle of social success for a woman. Let her exercise all the tact which she possesses to suppress male prosiug, except strictly *en tête-à-tête*, when at times it may be polite to submit to, or even actively encourage, it. Story-telling among men is universally regarded as a nuisance, except, of course, by the story-teller, who, however, of all men, detests another story-teller. But of all proser in a company, the intellectual proser is perhaps the most formidable and most difficult to be suppressed. The real stuff that is in him gives him a weight in society and a confidence in himself which, generally speaking, render all attempts to stop him futile. If the intellectual bore is a Comteist—and nothing more probable than that he is—he will come to your party with no idea more utterly absent from his mind than that of taking part in any general conversation, or in any conversation except on positive philosophy; for if a deeply-rooted conviction exists in any human mind, it will assuredly be found in his, that is, that his philosophy has measured the universe—he is never for an instant disturbed by any weak-minded sense of infinite intellectual possibility—of human reason itself being, perchance, but a fleeting phantasy. His creed is the one subject worthy of the serious attention of any intelligent human being; and, in place or out of place, his mission on earth is to preach it.

This curious inability to believe in infinite intellectual possibilities, or in any intellectual existence worth speaking of beyond the cognizance of one's own sympathies, is the result, I think, of some special development of some particular faculty, when others have not grown beyond mediocrity. Philosophers and men of science are, I think, more frequently afflicted with this kind of blindness than poets, though the latter are not exempt from the disease. One who has it is not necessarily what is ordinarily meant by a conceited man. He is quite of opinion that many men exist very much greater than himself; but then his heroes are all of his own intellectual stamp. He is, say, of a speculative turn, and of all men, admires, it may be, Sir W. Hamilton or Mr. J. S. Mill; but he no more believes in there being any merit in a song of Burns, than a man of no musical ear believes in an opera. There are subtle somethings which no critical faculty avails to grasp. Who can demonstrate humour or pathos? When I am touched by poetry or painting, I can give no account of how, why, or wherefore, I am touched. You may make it plain to my understanding that I ought not to be; or, contrariwise, that I ought to be when I am not. My understanding is quite open to conviction, but not so my sentiments, which are the most perverse things in the world. It is good that one's artistic taste should be pleased: that is, one likes to see a man spending his genius like his money, with economy and judgment; but the nature of the vital spark itself is incapable of analysis. I have listened to an admirable criticism upon a piece of poetry—a criticism which I was utterly incapable of delivering—yet feeling all the time that the critic was not, and to the end of time never, could be, touched by it

as I was. He had a faculty for seeing and analyzing the laws of art, and an enjoyment in seeing them fulfilled, which I had not; but something in nature too subtle to be caught and clothed in words was escaping him. I often wonder, when the likings and dislikings of a man invariably follow what he conceives to be the standard of correct taste, whether they can possibly be genuine. But to return to my subject.

Another style of man is, it may be, of Bonaparte's way of thinking. He goes in for action; and holds all theorizing which does not conduce to practical results to be the limbo of fools and dreamers. To such a man a M'Cloud appears scarcely in the light of a rational creature. A third, while he cannot conceive how a man of any intellect worth speaking of can find nourishment in the sawdust of dry abstract speculation, smiles with a mixture of melancholy and amusement at the crowd of poor, vain, foolish, mortals—Bonaparte included—who voluntarily submit to pain and labour, that they may flourish some glittering bauble in the eyes of a world of fools. Probably the philosopher in his closet, and the poet, are just as far from understanding and doing justice to the practical man, as the practical man is from doing justice to them. Did I possess practical power, there is, I think, nothing which I should feel so proud of; though, as Byron says—who

“ Would pique himself on intellect, whose use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice ? ”

which quotation brings me easily and gracefully back to the subject of dinners. As my space, however, is nearly exhausted, my “concluding remarks” must be short—an intimation which, I believe, is not unfrequently received with favour by an audience.

If you wish your dinner to be a success, attend to these maxims:—Let your cooking be good and unpretending; let your wine be plentiful, and good as your purse can afford. In Scotland, let me say, by the way, sociality thrives not badly on whisky toddy; to which beverage, however, the curse of metaphysical speculation seems to stick like a burr. Set one Scotchman down to “a tumbler” with another Scotchman, and you may safely bet a hundred pounds to sixpence, that, by the time they have finished their “second,” they will be fighting over the roots of the universe. I have watched the progress of the thing. The “argument” begins about the middle of the second brew. In its incipient stage the combatants are tolerably polite to each other, and capable of listening to, without interrupting, one another for perhaps five or six seconds. In the middle stage there is a tolerably free manifestation of contempt for each other's style of thinking. Smith and Brown now probably drop in for a chat; and they all awake next morning with a sense of having been slightly rude to one another, but resolved to “have it out over another tumbler” on the first opportunity.

But to proceed with my words of wisdom. Let your company be such that the *morale* of its component parts will dovetail. Avoid having rivals in money, station, or wit. Above all things, sink your own vanity, and attend to that of your guests; for thereby, in the long run, will *your* vanity receive most gratification; and, when you go to bed, you will fairly have

earned the right to please yourself with thinking that departed guests will be saying that they have had a pleasant party, and that you are a charming woman. I fear that they did not say this of Mrs. Lawrie. As for the great wit and humourist—asked because he was great, not because he was witty—who hates speculation, and had come primed, and had not succeeded in getting in a single joke or story, he vowed that he would never go back again; and I think it is very likely that he will keep his resolution.



CHILDREN AND CHILDREN'S BOOKS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LILLIPUT LEVEE."

SOME wiseacre, whose name has escaped me, criticising "The Sorrows of Werther" in a strain of indignant virtue, observed—thinking it was a clever thing to say—that the lover, when he took to women and children rather than men, did so because he could not bear the *contradiction* he met with among men. The idea of taking to the society of the young because they do not contradict one; is a *mauvaise plaisanterie* which might very suitably form the text for a discourse upon the natural relations of the young and the mature. I do not now intend to deliver such a discourse, but will observe that the criticism which I have just quoted, suggests the key to the major part of what is wrong in our children's literature. The price inexorably demanding to be paid for all genuine social intercourse, is sympathy. If the sympathy be wanting, the intercourse is full of "contradiction." The intercourse of the young and the mature is, in fact, largely made up of "contradiction." In some way or other, the discord must be "resolved," or else it must be borne in detail, in all its hardness and nakedness, as it turns up in fragments from time to time. When once the sympathy is found, the *burdensomeness* of the contradiction is gone. But how very few among us are at the pains to acquire the sympathy! The greater part of our lives is spent in doing things which would never be done by us if it were not for our children; and yet how little some of us reflect upon the space they occupy, the place they fill, in the great picture of existence! They are more than two to one; they "influence" us just as much as we "influence" them. We are indebted to them for incalculable strength, and light, and courage, and sweetness, and wisdom. The best things in the universe must be received in the spirit of a little child, or not at all. And in that spirit children should be approached, for social purposes, or not at all.

In one of the most beautiful works in the English, or any other language—the 'Cranford' of the late Mrs. Gaskell—when Susan has a baby, poor old Miss Matty puts on her spectacles, and looks with awe at the tender perfection of its little parts. I wish people would just extend the meaning of the phrase, and then imitate Miss Matty. The child contains, in little, all that the adult contains, and should be dealt with upon that hypothesis. Do you say it is so dealt with? I am sorry I cannot agree with you. Children

seem to me to be dealt with as if they were crude, shapeless lumps, that had to be "turned" into figure on the lathe, or the potter's wheel. I cannot here trust myself to pursue that subject. Without risking the loss of any sympathy on the reader's part, by saying things which, hastily put, might be misunderstood, let me say briefly, that, in my opinion, we meddle with children a great deal too much, and wait upon them a great deal too little. By waiting upon them, I mean, of course, laying ourselves out for them, in willing sympathy—giving them (spiritual) room and breathing space—treating them as we do our equals in a noble friendship. If this were done, however, it is quite true that a great deal which society thinks essential must be omitted. In my opinion, one single hour of frank *life* with children—life in which they give as much as they receive—is worth a whole quarter's "schooling;" but the moral expenditure in such an hour is, on the part of the adult, enormous. There is a story of a tumbler, who confidently made a bet that he would exactly follow a child in all its antics for one hour, imitating every movement as it occurred. The tumbler had to give in, "dead-beat." A moral effort, in similar kind, is just as arduous; and is not to be made at all by any one who thinks more of what "society" requires, than of the beauty and greatness of life, and the inscrutableness of its issues.

In all that relates to children, we have, however, been having, for many years past, an enormous improvement, and especially in children's *literature*. I should not wish to omit any honoured name in this department, but I cannot omit such names as these: Mrs. Gatty, Mrs. Mary Howitt, and Hans Christian Andersen.* Yet, in spite of the success of the books of such writers, the majority of parents, instead of buying, for presents, books that will please the children, buy such as please themselves—books which inculcate particular views of life, and specific lessons. Now, books of that kind have their place; but so have pleasure-books. And it strikes me with unspeakable surprise, to observe the inaptitude of the old folks in finding out what the young like. I have in my eye, while writing, three books in particular, which are greedily read by most young people, when they get hold of them, but which have no public at all proportioned to their merit as books for children. One is, 'Bob and his dog Quiz' (Lumley); the second is, 'The Adventures of Alfán, or the Magic Amulet' (Smith, Elder, & Co.); the third is a Selection from Wordsworth's poems (Strahan & Co.). I am confining myself now to books which children read for pleasure, and not for any moral whatever, though the books may contain moral suggestion. Above all, I am excluding from my mind books which teach or suggest, by even the remotest implication, any sort of theological doctrine. Wordsworth has been called the poet of middle-aged men. He is also the poet of children—who will read him with great eagerness, if you give them the chance. Some explanation of this may be found in a beautiful

* I have (for good reasons) said nothing here of many admirable writers for the young—some members of the Hood family; Miss Ingelow; Mr. Lewis Carroll; Dr. Macleod; and the late Mrs. Sherwood, over whose 'Little Henry and his Bearer,' and the 'Woodman and his dog Cæsar,' I have, in my time, cried even to "slops."

paper of Mr. Alexander Smith's, published in the first number of the 'Argosy.' At all events, I have seen the Selection above referred to as much thumbed as any child's book I ever saw, except 'Bob and his dog Quiz.' Now, how many parents are there who would *readily* suppose, or believe, that children would, of their own accord, turn to Wordsworth for delight? Perhaps about as many as might suppose children would read, or hear read with positive rapture, the best parts of Longfellow's 'Hiawatha,' the same poet's 'Building of the Ship,' or—now for a surprise—some of Thackeray's ballads. But let me recommend you just to try the effect of reading, with some histrionic animation, to a group of children, Thackeray's 'White Squall.' A good many songs are admirably suited to amuse children. I can recommend 'Little Billee,' well known as Mr. Thackeray's song; a song composed, I believe, by Mr. E. L. Blanchard (the gentleman who writes the Drury Lane pantomimes) called 'A Horrible Tale,' the mere tune of which is positively side-splitting; and last, not least, our venerable nautical acquaintance, 'Billy Taylor.' This will be enjoyed even by children who are too young to see the exquisite syntax of the second verse:—

Billy Taylor was a blithe young feller,
Wery full o' life, and wery full o' glee :
And his mind he did diskiver
To a maiden fair and free.

Rumty tumty, &c.

Soon, four-and-twenty brisk young fellers,
Clad in jackets, blue array,
And they took poor Billy Taylor
From his tro' love* far away.

Rumty tumty, &c.

Children are never tired of hearing 'Billy Taylor.' Of course, it is easy to improvise a slight alteration in any particular line of a song, if the company happens to be mixed. Take a verse in 'Billy Taylor':—

In the werry fust engagement,
She fights away like all the rest,
Till a gust of wind blow'd her jacket open,
Vich it can never be expressed.

The last line is a substitution for the simplicity of the original; which does very well with children, but not if a young lady of seventeen or eighteen is present. Here are two verses of the 'Horrible Tale':—

First the father into the garden did walk,
And cut his throat with a lump of chalk;
Then the mother an end to herself she put,
By hanging of herself in the water-butt;
Then the sister went down on her bended knees,
And smothered herself with toasted cheese:
But the brother, who was a determined young fella,
Went and poison'd himself with his umberella;

For oh! it is such a horrible tale, &c.

* Several writers have had the sense to see that the vulgar true-love is a corruption of troth-love; but none of them seem to see how to abbreviate the word properly.

Then the little baby in the cradle,
 Shot itself dead with the silver ladle ;
 While the servant girl, seeing what they did,
 Strangled herself with the saucepan lid ;
 The miserable cat, by the kitchen fire,
 Swallowed a portion of the fender, and did expire ;
 And a fly on the ceiling—this case was the wust 'un—
 Went and blowed itself up with spontaneous combustion ;

For oh ! it is, &c.

These are, of course, compositions which go very near to the verge of what is, on grounds of good taste, admissible ; but in hours of high animal spirits, I think them as allowable as they are laughable. They are simply fair, though extreme examples of something which I am now going to refer to as not plentiful in children's literature—I mean *abandon*. We have plenty of fast, funny books for the young ; but this comic writing is not what I mean. There may be books for children without that, but there is no child-writing without a certain humorous fatalism in it. I remember (and could once repeat verbatim) an admirable example of this quaint fatalism of manner and conception, in a child-poem of Mary Howitt's, called 'Madam Fortescue and her Cat.' Every incident and every rhyme comes as if the author couldn't help it :—

This is a nice pleasant parlour,
 As you may see in a minute ;
 It belongs to good Madam Fortescue,
 And there she sits in it.

* * * * *
 That's the old gentleman's portrait,
 Hanging there on the wall ;
 In the thunder-and-lightning coat,
 And bag-wig and all ;

Very old fashioned and stately,
 With a sword by his side ;
 But it's many a long year, now,
 Since the old gentleman died.

* * * * *
 To be sure, I promised Madam
 To love the cat like a relation,
 But, now she's dead and gone,
 Why, that's of no signification.

* * * * *
 Be sure you do it safely ;
 Hang her with the rope double ;
 And her skin will make you a cap,
 Friend Scroggin, for your trouble.

* * * * *
 And with that, up jumps Scroggin—
 You see where he stands,
 Dangling the very rope
 In his great rough hands—
 And he tells all the company
 Assembled there that day,
 How Crabthorn had misused the cat,
 And had her made away.

I think everybody will see that the child-poem from which I quote these verses was a model in its kind. My own admiration of it is very great; and I also admire the *abandon* or fatalism in question when it takes a strong and broadly humorous shape, as in 'Billy Taylor' or 'A Horrible Tale.'

It was not my design to do in these pages what I have the material for doing in an exhaustive shape another day—namely, analyze the best child-literature of all times; exhibit its constant and its fluctuating elements: and this in connection with a view of the just relations of youthful and adult life. These desultory comments are intended merely to point out to those who have not much considered the subject, that it is not so simple and easy a thing as some wisacres think, to decide what books are suited for children, and what are not. If every man is born Platonist or Aristotelian, every child is one or the other; and there is that primordial divarication of taste to begin with. There is an old-fashioned book called 'Poetry for Children,' by Lucy Aikin, with which I was familiar when a very little boy; and to this day I can repeat the majority of the poems it contains. But how many parents are prepared to hear what follows? After my childhood, there was a very long gap in my life, during which I devoted all my leisure to "dry" and difficult questions, and rarely turned to poetry of any kind. But through all the anxious years, the verses of my little child's book nestled in my memory, and were a sweet "joy" to me, whose "loveliness increased." When I did turn to poetry, I found that these favourites of my childhood were choice fragments from Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Cowper, and Dryden. Now there is, I firmly believe, not one adult in fifty thousand who would have thought of picking out these beautiful fragments from great poets for the use of a child. The majority of reviewers would say, off-hand, that the book was unfit for its purpose; yet, once afloat, it had a large success: and, if I were asked to name the book to which I was most indebted, I rather think I should say Lucy Aikin's 'Poetry for Children.' I picked up a copy at a stall a year ago, and I mean to keep it!

"One word more I wish to say; one last remark I wish to offer." One of the pleasantest and most effective instruments of home-education, and one of the easiest (and certainly the cheapest) ways of giving delight to a group of children is, to read to them, with dramatic emphasis and gesture, something they would otherwise only in part understand. By the contagion of sympathy, in a little circle of such differing ages, there goes on an inter-communication of intelligence which utterly transcends and makes ludicrous all the common notions of what the young can "understand." There is a kind of writing adapted to such readings—not poetry for children, but child-poetry—which the writer of these lines has desired to cultivate: writing in which a common platform, on which the young and the mature may meet, is provided; with, of course, varying success. To produce a little book, which, while answering all the ordinary ends of a child's book, and keeping to the traditions and the vocabulary of the nursery, should also, in various ways, present the child-like moods and fancies of the mature to the imaginations of the young; which, though high and pure in tone, should not contain one line of dogmatic moralising; which, avoiding all *criticism* of child-life, should

yet go nearly the whole round of child-experience, and *include* a great variety of moral suggestion; and to do this with such a careful use of poetic forms, that no child reader should be made less fit by the book for the enjoyment of poetry; this (to end a long sentence) was the object of a little book by the present writer, which is just now republished, in a revised shape, with large additions.



FAMINE-STRICKEN.

BY AN OLD INDIAN.

THE awful sufferings which the famine, now raging in India, is inflicting on a great part of its population, recalls to one's memory Boccaccio's brief yet terribly comprehensive description of the plague in Florence. The great pestilence of the fourteenth century spread "like fire when it comes in contact with large masses of combustibles," till its victims were daily numbered by thousands. In the vain hope of escaping from it, various plans were adopted. While some "walked everywhere with odours and nosegays to smell to," "for the whole atmosphere seemed to them tainted with the stench of dead bodies," others lived temperately, shut their ears to all news of the plague, and "diverted themselves with music." Some fled from the plague-stricken city; brother from brother, wife from husband, and even parent from child, for the terror inspired by the calamity was so great that it dried up the natural affections. Another class remained in the city incessantly reveling in taverns and in deserted private houses, indulging every brutal passion, and defying every law, human and divine; for those whose duty it was to enforce the laws were themselves either sick or dead. But there was no haven of safety. The plague seized on the temperate man diverting himself with his music, on the man inhaling his odorous nosegay, on the coward in his flight, and on the reveller in the midst of his brutal revelry. They were buried, if noble and wealthy, with some show of ceremony, but if of the middle and lower rank, with scarce any. These either breathed their last in the streets, or in their own houses, "where the stench that came from them first made discovery of their deaths to the neighbourhood." When the graveyards were filled, deep trenches were dug, and into them the corpses were thrown, piled up in rows "as goods are stowed in a ship," "for things had come to that pass, that men's lives were no more regarded than the lives of so many beasts." For five months was this the state of the city. In the adjacent country "the poor distressed labourers, with their families, without either the aid of physicians or the help of servants," might be seen "languishing on the highways, in the fields, and in their own houses, and dying rather like cattle than human creatures." The ripe corn was left ungathered; the cattle were allowed to roam about at large, and every man lived as if each day would be his last; that is, he became as dissolute in manners as were the

citizens. How many perished in the country is not related, but in the city upwards of one hundred thousand were swept away, and thus were the survivors, for the first time, made aware that their town had been so populous. A more awful mode of taking a census can scarcely be imagined.

Take away from this picture all that lends it a horrible picturesqueness—the music, the revelry, the long train of corpses borne to the place of whole-sale burial, preceded by the priests with their crucifix; the sudden deaths in the midst of smiling corn-fields; flocks of sheep, goats, and herds of oxen turned loose: but leave all of its human suffering: add to the swift deaths by pestilence death by the lingering, agonizing process of starvation; the bodies, when found near the towns, thrown into plague pits, but more often left to rot by the roadside or in the jungle, where the flesh is devoured by jackals, dogs, and vultures; and then imagine to yourself, if you can, the fate of the people, not of a single city and the country immediately surrounding it, but of territories as large as European kingdoms enduring this accumulation of horrors, and you will have a faint notion of the significance of the words “famine in India.”

The famine commenced in the month of April last in Orissa and Ganjam, coast districts extending along the north-eastern side of the Bay of Bengal. From thence it has spread upwards into other districts of the Bengal Presidency, and downwards into Bellary, Salem, Coimbatore, and North and South Arcot—districts in the Madras Presidency. In these districts the distress is only less terrible than it is in Bengal: it is not so wide-spread, nor is it quite so severe. But even in them the lower classes are described as having “hardly a rag to cover their nakedness, and hardly any flesh to cover their bones;” thousands of cattle have died for want of water and pasture, while those that still live resemble the miserable human beings in being mere moving skeletons. But it is in Orissa, Ganjam, and Midnapore that the distress wrought by the famine is felt in all its intensity. In these districts it is supposed that the death-rate has been a thousand a day for many months; but the number of those who have thus miserably perished by hunger and disease will never be accurately ascertained. Vast numbers have fled from the districts, some to sleep an eternal sleep by the roadsides, where their unburied bones lie bleaching in the scorching sun—mute witnesses to the blessings of British rule—and others to arrive in Calcutta, so emaciated that they appear as if their skeleton frames were covered with thin, transparent india-rubber. In the “City of Palaces,” and other towns where they have sought refuge, it is calculated that seventy-five thousand are daily fed by public charity, and at least double that number, or one hundred and fifty thousand, by private charity. To see one of these immense crowds, when the daily distribution of rice takes place, is a most heart-rending spectacle of utter wretchedness. In one quarter are thousands of Hindoos, in another thousands of Mussulmen, and at a little distance, sheltered by the ghaut, are the women, girls, and children. You scan the faces of these assembled thousands, and see in every one of them the same expression—the pinched, despairing, yet resigned look of mortal weakness, or of mortal sickness, which the sight of food suddenly changes into a hungry, longing, devouring look—the kind of

look which inspires feelings of pity for even a starving wild animal; but which, when worn by the human countenance, is indescribably painful to behold. Over all is the silence of death; no loud and noisy laughter, as would be the case at other times; hardly a sound, save at intervals, when some famished wretch throws up his arms and utters a cry of wild despair, wrung from him by the gnawing, unappeasable pangs of hunger. At other places fearful struggles to get possession of the food take place, and many lives are lost in the sickening scramble. The picture would not be complete did I not add that many of the men who receive this relief have fled from their wives and families, leaving them to the fate which they themselves have escaped. Thus has the misery wrought by the famine stamped out the love of offspring and of home—conspicuous features in the character of the people of India, and more especially of the Hindoos. Of the women thus deserted by their natural protectors many touching stories are told by eye-witnesses. For example: A planter was informed that a woman had died by the roadside, and that a living child was at her breast. He sent out his servants, who found the corpse, and the child so tightly clasped in the mother's arm, that in bending it back, stiff and cold, it broke. The poor little infant, exhausted by exposure and want, died as it was being released. Another case: A woman, with her three young children, crawled up to a planter's house just as tiffin was being cleared away; the remains of the curry and rice were carried out into the verandah and placed before her. Without attempting to eat, she seated the three children round the dish, who speedily devoured its contents; and, although the mother was wasted to a skeleton, mumbling her thanks, she turned away, grateful that her offspring had been fed, even while she herself still hungered. Here is yet another instance, still more wonderfully touching in its forgetfulness of self: A little girl and her mother were seen lying under a mango tree. Both were faint from hunger; they had been trying to keep life together by feeding on snails, berries, and lizards; but growing weaker day by day, they at last sunk down under this tree to await a lingering death. Some boiled rice was placed before them. The mother was too weak to raise herself, so, although "the child's big eyes flashed with a hungry gleam," her little hands, well filled, first sought the mother's mouth, and not until half the rice was thus consumed did she herself eat.

The causes of so much misery, in some instances so nobly endured, are well known and easily removable; but before I refer to them I wish to draw attention to the state of feeling on those points which is being displayed by some of the mountain tribes of Orissa. They believe that Tari Pennu, the Earth goddess, has sent this famine as a punishment for their sin in ceasing to worship her with human sacrifices. This monstrous belief will not surprise those who are acquainted with the reasons which were urged by them in its favour, and the objections they made to the abolition of the barbarous custom. To thoroughly understand this matter it will be necessary to notice, as briefly as possible, the religious doctrines of the Khonds. They believe in one Supreme Being, whom they sometimes call the God of Light, sometimes the Sun god. In the beginning he created for himself a consort, who became the source of all evil and the Earth goddess. Afterwards he created the

earth; and walking upon it one day with Tari Pennu, was so enraged with her because she refused to scratch the back of his neck, that he resolved to create out of the earth a new being, man, who should render to him the most devoted homage. He also resolved to create out of the earth all that was necessary for man's existence. Filled with jealousy, Tari Pennu attempted to prevent the fulfilment of these purposes, but only succeeded in altering the order of creation. Taking a handful of earth, Boora Pennu threw it behind him to create man, but it was caught by Tari, and cast on one side, whence arose trees, herbs, and all kinds of vegetable life. In like manner she intercepted, caught, and flung aside three other handfuls of earth, which became respectively the fish of the sea, the beasts of the earth, and the birds of the air. Then, seeing what his rebellious consort had done, Boora Pennu put his hand on her head, to prevent any further interference with his will, placed a fifth handful of earth on the ground, and from it was the human race created. The goddess then placed her hands over the earth, and said "let those beings you have made exist; you shall create no more;" whereupon the god caused an exudation of sweat to proceed from his body, collected it in his hand, and threw it around, saying—"to all that I have created;" whence originated love, and sex, and the continuance of species. At first the human race was sinless, went about unclothed, and enjoyed free communion with Boora. They lived without labour, and in perfect harmony. But all this was changed by Tari, who "sowed the seeds of sin into mankind as into a ploughed field." Then came the loss of innocence, which was followed by disease and death. The earth became a jungle, flowers became poisonous, and animals became savage. The god and goddess fiercely contended for superiority over the new creation; and the supposed result of this supposed conflict is the source of a division in the religious belief of the mountaineers. One sect—those who follow Boora Pennu—believe that he was victorious, in proof of which they allege the pains of childbirth which have been imposed upon the sex of Tari. The other sect—those who worship the goddess—believe that she was unconquered, and that although she is the source of all evil, she can confer every form of earthly benefit, indirectly, by not obstructing the good which flows from Boora, and directly, by her own act. They also believe that she appeared on the earth in a feminine form, called by them Umbally Bylee, and that while under this form she introduced order and the art of agriculture, as well as all other blessings, into the world. As Umbally Bylee, she was one day slicing vegetables, and accidentally cutting her finger, the blood drops fell on the soft barren mud, which instantly became dry and firm earth. "Behold the good change," exclaimed the goddess; "cut up my body to complete it." But, regarding her as one of themselves, the people declined to do her bidding, and in order that it might be carried out they resolved instead to purchase victims from other peoples. This is the origin of what is variously termed the Meriah, Tokki, or Keddi sacrifice. At first its efficacy was confined to those who personally practised the rite, but afterwards Tari ordered that all mankind should be included in the benefits it was to confer. Hence the sect of Tari believe that the responsibility for the well-being of the whole world rests upon them. The practice of a rite so

horrible on such purely benevolent principles is one of its most singular features. Thus it was no uncommon thing to hear the followers of Tari speak of the followers of Boora as poor uninstructed fools, who could not understand that, through the virtue of human sacrifices, all mankind, and they themselves, lived and prospered; while, on the other hand, the worshippers of the God of Light exclaimed, "Wretched men! they destroy life and devour human flesh without the apology of the tiger and the snake, and believe that they conciliate the gods." So contradictory is human nature, however, that those who uttered these lofty sentiments were themselves guilty of a crime no less atrocious than the one they so justly condemned—that of female infanticide. And for this they produced the authority of Boora Pennu, who at the beginning of the world said to men, "Behold! from the making of one feminine being what have I and the whole world suffered. You are at liberty to bring up only as many women as you can manage." And yet these mountaineers, guilty of such fearful crimes, had many noble virtues. They accounted as great sins the refusal of hospitality to a guest or his abandonment, the breaking of an oath, or promise, or pledge of friendship, or old law or custom, the denial of a gift, the contracting of debts, the payment of which was ruinous to a man's tribe, which is responsible for the engagements of all its members, skulking in time of war, and the betrayal of a public secret. Whoever was guilty of any of these sins, they believed, would be born again, afflicted with disease, poverty, and mental qualities which would render him infamous. The chief virtues were, of course, the opposites of the sins just enumerated, and in addition, the killing of a foe in public battle, death on the battle-field, and (among the sacrificing tribes) being a victim to the Earth goddess. To be acceptable to Tari a victim had to be purchased, in which case the cost varied from fifteen to two hundred rupees (from thirty shillings to 20*l.*), or he must have been born a victim, that is to say, the child of a victim father, or he must have been dedicated to the Earth goddess while a child by his father or guardian. The victims, who were of both sexes, were lodged in the house of the village chief, in fetters, if grown up; at liberty, if children. They were looked upon as consecrated beings, and if at large, were eagerly welcomed at every door. They were, in short, treated with a mixture of reverence and tenderness. But when the fancied necessity for a sacrifice arrived, that is, when any misfortune befell a family or a village in the shape of disease, loss of cattle, or want of rain, the Meriah was led out to die his horrible death. Ten or twelve days before the appointed time, the victim's hair, till then left unshorn, was cut off; and the people assembled to hear the Janni, or priest, address a preliminary prayer to Tari, in which he announced the intended celebration of the rite. Three days before the sacrifice all the people assembled together, and indulged in every form of wild riot and gross excess. The first day and night were passed in drunken feasting and frantic dancing. On the morning of the second day the victim, who had been kept fasting, was carefully washed, clothed with a new garment, and led forth from the village in solemn procession amid music and dancing. At a short distance from every village was the Meriah grove, composed of large forest trees casting a deep shade, and near to a rivulet called the Meriah stream. These

groves were kept sacred from the axe, and were regarded by the Khonds as haunted ground. In the centre of the grove was fixed a post, at the foot of which, and bound to it, the victim was seated, and he was then anointed with oil, ghee, and turmeric. Finally, he was adorned with flowers, and in this posture was worshipped throughout the remainder of the day. At night the villagers resumed their licentious feasting, and on the morning of the third day the victim was given a little milk. The sacrificing priest then implored the goddess to shower down her blessings upon the people, by filling their homes with the voices of happy children, by increasing their cattle and poultry, and by adding to the fertility of their fields, so that by increase of wealth might come increase of worship. He next minutely recounted the origin of the rite, the principal features of which I have already described, and concluded by narrating the incidents which attended the first sacrifice of all:—"We obeyed the goddess, and assembled the people. Then the victim child wept, and reviled, and uttered curses. All the people rejoiced except those with whom the child had dwelt and the Janni. They were overwhelmed with grief: their sorrows prevailed entirely over their expectations of benefit, and they did not give either their minds or their faith to the gods. 'The world,' said they, 'rejoices; we are filled with despair;' and they demanded of the deity, 'Why have you instituted this miserable heartrending rite?' Then the Earth goddess came again and rested upon the Janni, and said, 'Away with this grief! Your answer is this; when the victim shall weep, say to him—blame not us, blame your parents who sold you. What fault is ours? The Earth goddess demands a sacrifice; it is necessary to the world. The tiger begins to rage, the snake to poison; fevers, and every pain, afflict the people—shall you alone be exempt from evil? When you shall have given repose to the world you shall become a god by the will of the gods.'" At this point in the proceedings it was usual for one of the villagers to personate the victim, and to endeavour to excite the compassion of the chief and the priest, when something to this effect was said:—"I knew nothing of your intention to kill me. I looked upon you all as my parents. When there was delicate food in the village, I was fed. When the child of any one suffered, he grieved; but if I suffered the whole village grieved. When did you conceive this fraud—this wickedness to destroy me? You, O my father, and you, and you, O my fathers, do not destroy me. See! there are the palm-trees I planted; there is the public building on which I laboured. Look behind you. The cows and the sheep which I tended look lovingly at me. All this time you gave me no hint of my intended fate. I toiled with you at every work with my whole mind. Had I known of this doom I had leapt from a precipice and died. Let the whole burden of my soul's grief, as I remember the past, lie upon you." This ceremony gone through, the victim was led from the sacred grove to the spot where the sacrifice was to take place. As it would have been contrary to the essential principle of the rite for him to have met his fate bound, or with any show of resistance, the bones of the arms and legs were sometimes broken, but more generally he was stupefied with opium. This done, the Janni wounded the Meriah with his axe, whereupon the crowd rushed at the victim, and stripped the flesh

from his bones, leaving untouched the head and the intestines. These, and what remained of the unhappy victim, were carefully guarded till next day, when they were burnt, and the ashes scattered over the fields. Meantime, those who had secured a piece of flesh hastened home to bury it in their favourite fields. Such, then, was the mode in which the worship of the Earth goddess was conducted. But occasionally there was a deviation from this pattern. Thus, in one district, the victim was placed on a low stage, sloping on either side, like a roof, his limbs bound so as to confine but not to prevent his struggles, while hot brands were applied to his body, which caused him to roll upwards and downwards. As long as he was capable of moving or uttering cries was he thus tortured, under the belief that the fall of rain would be proportioned to the number of tears he shed. Next day he was cut to pieces. Every month in every year, till within a very recent period, were these diabolical sacrifices carried on in the hill tracts of Orissa. Many British officers, but notably the late Major Macpherson, were at various times engaged in the good work of suppressing them; and at last they succeeded in inducing the tribes to give up the practice, not because they were convinced of its wickedness, but because they saw that the British Government was very powerful. This led them to entertain a notion that the God of the English must be their own God of Light, who had not sanctioned the rite of human sacrifice; and hence they began to think that the battle waged between Boora Pennu and Tari Pennu had resulted in the total defeat of the latter. Favourable harvests helped to give strength to this half-formed conviction; but in relinquishing the practice they stipulated for permission, in the event of any misfortune befalling them, to denounce the Sirkar to the Earth goddess as its cause. In a word, they declined to take the responsibility of the change upon themselves. Their faith in what constituted the very base of their religion was only shaken, not uprooted, and now has occurred this devastating famine, with its accompanying pestilence, to rekindle their belief in the efficacy of an atrocious rite at which humanity shudders.

These famines are of frequent occurrence in India, in fact they may be regarded as one of the "institutions" of the country. Omitting all mention of those which took place before 1831, it is recorded that in that and the two following years the population of the province of Guntoor, a district in the Madras Presidency, was reduced from half to a quarter of a million by famine and pestilence. During the following thirty years there were many minor famines—minor, that is, comparatively speaking—and then there was the great drought, which swept over the North-West Provinces in 1860–61. In those disastrous years the suffering was on a gigantic scale; but as large, numbers of the people concealed their distress, enduring it even unto death rather than break the rules of caste or run counter to the feelings of their tribes, the number who are known to have perished—from eighty thousand to ninety thousand—does not represent the total mortality. The actual sufferers numbered one million and a half, and the loss of property amounted in value to three millions and three quarters sterling. Being of such frequent occurrence, the reader unacquainted with the system of Indian misrule would never for a moment imagine that the remedy for such deep and wide-spread distress is

perfectly plain, and that it has been repeatedly brought to the notice of the authorities by such men as Sir Arthur Cotton and the late Colonel Baird Smith. To the former distinguished officer belongs the merit of having first aroused public attention to the fact that works of irrigation are not only indispensable to the welfare of the people of India, but that they are enormously profitable when constructed. Works of this kind answer two purposes; they preserve the people from the horrors of famine, and likewise from the horrors of inundations. These are the views, not of a mere philanthropist, but of a skilful engineer who has proved their truth in one district of the Madras Presidency, where he was allowed to carry out his plans. Since Sir Arthur Cotton made the weir across the river Godavery, by means of which the water, instead of running waste into the sea, is stored up to irrigate the land, there have been no famines in Rajahmundry. The district has gone on increasing in prosperity from year to year; the people are happy, contented, and well-to-do; and while the revenue has augmented, it is collected without difficulty. Colonel Baird Smith, also, in his report on the famine of 1860-61, pointed out that by constructing canals and reservoirs the Government might "hope to reduce drought, even of the highest intensity we have yet experienced, from the status of a cruel and destructive calamity to that of a temporary and bearable misfortune." Government after government has recognized the truth of these views; and government after government has neglected to carry them into operation. This inaction is defended on the ground that the surplus revenue is not large enough to enable Government to construct such works; that contracting a loan for the purpose is "inexpedient;" and that handing over the making of the works to public companies would entail a future sacrifice of revenue, and lead to the oppression of the ryots. The net result is that nothing is done until another famine sweeps away its thousands; and then there is much spending of money to little purpose. To form a correct estimate of the wickedness of this policy of mingled *laissez faire* and obstructiveness, we must remember that the Government of India is also the landlord of India, and that consequently it is bound to look after the well-being of the people in a double capacity. Regarded from this point of view, its conduct in both capacities must be pronounced culpable in the highest degree. If an individual landlord were to cause such misery by a total neglect of his duties, I think I know what would be said of him; and if his government were to allow him to go on unchecked, I think I know what would be said of it. But here is the landlord-government of India rivalling in inhumanity the worst of Irish landlords of past times, and the most tyrannical government of the present time. Evicting tenants so that they may perish by the roadside is brutal, and shooting down unarmed Poles in the streets of Warsaw is cruel murder; but these acts are merciful compared with the prolonged, agonising misery, ending in death, which the wilful neglect of the first of its duties by the Government of India periodically inflicts on thousands of the unhappy people whose country it has undertaken to rule. No language can be too strong to condemn such conduct, and no language is strong enough to depict the misery which results from it. It appears to me that Burke's celebrated denunciation of the first governor-general who went out to India

is, slightly altered, both appropriate and applicable to the governments which have succeeded him. For they may be impeached in the name of the Commons' House of Parliament, whose trust they have betrayed; in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honour they have sullied; in the name of the people of India, whose country they have turned into a desert; and, lastly, they may be impeached in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age and every rank, as the common enemies and destroyers of all.



PORT IN A STORM.

"PAPA," said my sister Effie, one evening as we all sat about the drawing-room fire. One after another, as nothing followed, we turned our eyes upon her. There she sat, still silent, embroidering the corner of a cambric handkerchief, apparently unaware that she had spoken.

It was a very cold night in the beginning of winter. My father had come home early, and we had dined early that we might have a long evening together, for it was my father and mother's wedding-day, and we always kept it as the homeliest of holidays. My father was seated in an easy-chair by the chimney corner, with a jug of Burgundy near him, and my mother sat by his side, now and then taking a sip out of his glass.

Effie was now nearly nineteen; the rest of us were younger. What she was thinking about we did not know then, though we could all guess now. Suddenly she looked up, and seeing all eyes fixed upon her, became either aware or suspicious, and blushed rosy red.

"You spoke to me, Effie. What was it, my dear?"

"O yes, papa. I wanted to ask you whether you wouldn't tell us, to-night, the story about how you——"

"Well, my love?"

"—About how you—"

"I am listening, my dear."

"I mean, about mamma and you."

"Yes, yes. About how I got your mamma for a mother to you. Yes. I paid a dozen of port for her."

We all and each exclaimed *Papa!* and my mother laughed.

"Tell us all about it," was the general cry.

"Well, I will," answered my father. "I must begin at the beginning, though."

And, filling his glass with Burgundy, he began.

"As far back as I can remember, I lived with my father in an old manor-house in the country. It did not belong to my father, but to an elder brother of his, who at that time was captain of a seventy-four. He loved the sea more than his life; and, as yet apparently, had loved his ship better than any woman. At least he was not married.

"My mother had been dead for some years, and my father was now in

very delicate health. He had never been strong, and since my mother's death, I believe, though I was too young to notice it, he had pined away. I am not going to tell you anything about him just now, because it does not belong to my story. When I was about five years old, as nearly as I can judge, the doctors advised him to leave England. The house was put into the hands of an agent to let—at least, so I suppose; and he took me with him to Madeira, where he died. I was brought home by his servant, and by my uncle's directions, sent to a boarding-school; from there to Eton, and from there to Oxford.

"Before I had finished my studies, my uncle had been an admiral for some time. The year before I left Oxford, he married Lady Georgiana Thornbury, a widow lady, with one daughter. Thereupon he bade farewell to the sea, though I dare say he did not like the parting, and retired with his bride to the house where he was born—the same house I told you I was born in, which had been in the family for many generations, and which your cousin now lives in.

"It was late in the autumn when they arrived at Culverwood. They were no sooner settled than my uncle wrote to me, inviting me to spend Christmas-tide with them at the old place. And here you may see that my story has arrived at its beginning.

"It was with strange feelings that I entered the house. It looked so old-fashioned, and stately, and grand, to eyes which had been accustomed to all the modern commonplaces! Yet the shadowy recollections which hung about it gave an air of homeliness to the place, which, along with the grandeur, occasioned a sense of rare delight. For what can be better than to feel that you are in stately company, and at the same time perfectly at home in it? I am grateful to this day for the lesson I had from the sense of which I have spoken—that of mingled awe and tenderness in the aspect of the old hall as I entered it for the first time after fifteen years, having left it a mere child.

"I was cordially received by my old uncle and my new aunt. But the moment Kate Thornbury entered I lost my heart, and have never found it again to this day. I get on wonderfully well without it, though, for I have got the loan of a far better one till I find my own, which, therefore, I hope I never shall."

My father glanced at my mother as he said this, and she returned his look in a way which I can now interpret as a quiet satisfied confidence. But the tears came in Effie's eyes. She had trouble before long, poor girl! But it is not her story I have to tell.—My father went on:

"Your mother was prettier then than she is now, but not so beautiful; beautiful enough, though, to make me think there never had been or could again be anything so beautiful. She met me kindly, and I met her awkwardly."

"You made me feel that I had no business there," said my mother, speaking for the first time in the course of the story.

"See there, girls," said my father. "You are always so confident in first impressions, and instinctive judgment! I was awkward because, as I said, I

fell in love with your mother the moment I saw her; and she thought I regarded her as an intruder into the old family precincts.

"I will not follow the story of the days. I was very happy, except when I felt too keenly how unworthy I was of Kate Thornbury; not that she meant to make me feel it, for she was never other than kind; but she was such that I could not help feeling it. I gathered courage, however, and before three days were over, I began to tell her all my slowly reviving memories of the place, with my childish adventures associated with this and that room or outhouse or spot in the grounds; for the longer I was in the place the more my old associations with it revived, till I was quite astonished to find how much of my history in connection with Culverwood had been thoroughly imprinted on my memory. She never showed, at least, that she was weary of my stories; which, however interesting to me, must have been tiresome to any one who did not sympathize with what I felt towards my old nest. From room to room we rambled, talking or silent; and nothing could have given me a better chance, I believe, with a heart like your mother's. I think it was not long before she began to like me, at least, and liking had every opportunity of growing into something stronger, if only she too did not come to the conclusion that I was unworthy of her.

"My uncle received me like the jolly old tar that he was—welcomed me to the old ship—hoped we should make many a voyage together—and that I would take the run of the craft—all but in one thing.

"'You see, my boy,' he said, 'I married above my station, and I don't want my wife's friends to say that I laid alongside of her to get hold of her daughter's fortune. No, no, my boy; your old uncle has too much salt water in him to do a dog's trick like that. So you take care of yourself—that's all. She might turn the head of a wiser man than ever came out of our family.'

"I did not tell my uncle that his advice was already too late; for that, though it was not an hour since I had first seen her, my head was so far turned already, that the only way to get it right again, was to go on turning it in the same direction; though, no doubt, there was a danger of overhauling the screw. The old gentleman never referred to the matter again, nor took any notice of our increasing intimacy; so that I sometimes doubt even now if he could have been in earnest in the very simple warning he gave me. Fortunately, Lady Georgiana liked me—at least I thought she did, and that gave me courage."

"That's all nonsense, my dear," said my mother. "Mamma was nearly as fond of you as I was; but you never wanted courage."

"I knew better than to show my cowardice, I daresay," returned my father. "But," he continued, "things grew worse and worse, till I was certain I should kill myself, or go straight out of my mind, if your mother would not have me. So it went on for a few days, and Christmas was at hand.

"The admiral had invited several old friends to come and spend the Christmas week with him. Now you must remember that, although you look on me as an old-fashioned fogie——"

"Oh, papa!" we all interrupted; but he went on.

"Yet my old uncle was an older-fashioned fogie, and his friends were much the same as himself. Now, I am fond of a glass of port, though I dare not take it, and must content myself with Burgundy. Uncle Bob would have called Burgundy pig-wash. He could not do without his port, though he was a moderate enough man, as customs were. Fancy, then, his dismay when, on questioning his butler, an old coxen of his own, and after going down to inspect in person, he found that there was scarcely more than a dozen of port in the wine-cellar. He turned white with dismay, and, till he had brought the blood back to his countenance by swearing, he was something awful to behold in the dim light of the tallow candle old Jacob held in his tattooed fist. I will not repeat the words he used; fortunately, they are out of fashion amongst gentlemen, although ladies, I understand, are beginning to revive the custom, now old, and always ugly. Jacob reminded his honour that he would not have more put down till he had got a proper cellar built, for the one there was, he had said, was not fit to put anything but dead men in. Thereupon, after abusing Jacob for not reminding him of the necessities of the coming season, he turned to me, and began, certainly not to swear at his own father, but to expostulate sideways with the absent shade for not having provided a decent cellar before his departure from this world of dinners and wine, hinting that it was somewhat selfish, and very inconsiderate of the welfare of those who were to come after him. Having a little exhausted his indignation, he came up, and wrote the most peremptory order to his wine-merchant, in Liverpool, to let him have thirty dozen of port before Christmas Day, even if he had to send it by post-chaise. I took the letter to the post myself, for the old man would trust nobody but me, and indeed would have preferred taking it himself; but in winter he was always lame from the effects of a bruise he had received from a falling spar in the battle of Aboukir.

"That night I remember well. I lay in bed wondering whether I might venture to say a word, or even to give a hint to your mother that there was a word that pined to be said if it might. All at once I heard a whine of the wind in the old chimney. How well I knew that whine! For my kind aunt had taken the trouble to find out from me what room I had occupied as a boy, and, by the third night I spent there, she had got it ready for me. I jumped out of bed, and found that the snow was falling fast and thick. I jumped into bed again, and began wondering what my uncle would do if the port did not arrive. And then I thought that, if the snow went on falling as it did, and if the wind rose any higher, it might turn out that the roads through the hilly part of Yorkshire in which Culverwood lay, might very well be blocked up.

"The north wind doth blow,
And we shall have snow,
And what will my uncle do then, poor thing?
He'll run for his port,
But he will run short,
And have too much water to drink, poor thing.

"With the influences of the chamber of my childhood crowding upon me, I kept repeating the travestied rhyme to myself, till I fell asleep.

"Now, boys and girls, if I were writing a novel, I should like to make you, somehow or other, put together the facts—that I was in the room I have mentioned; that I had been in the cellar with my uncle for the first time that evening; that I had seen my uncle's distress, and heard his reflections upon his father. I may add that I was not myself, even then, so indifferent to the merits of a good glass of port as to be unable to enter into my uncle's dismay, and that of his guests at last, if they should find that the snow-storm had actually closed up the sweet approaches of the expected port. If I was personally indifferent to the matter, I fear it is to be attributed to your mother and not to myself."

"Nonsense!" interposed my mother once more. "I never knew such a man for making little of himself and much of other people. You never drank a glass too much port in your life."

"That's why I'm so fond of it, my dear," returned my father. "I declare you make me quite discontented with my pig-wash here."

"That night I had a dream."

"The next day the visitors began to arrive. Before the evening after, they had all come. There were five of them—three tars and two land-crabs, as they called each other when they got jolly, which, by-the-way, they would not have done long without me."

"My uncle's anxiety visibly increased. Each guest, as he came down to breakfast, received each morning a more constrained greeting.—I beg your pardon, ladies; I forgot to mention that my aunt had lady-visitors, of course. But the fact is, it is only the port-drinking visitors in whom my story is interested, always excepted your mother."

"These ladies my admiral uncle greeted with something even approaching to servility. I understood him well enough. He instinctively sought to make a party to protect him when the awful secret of his cellar should be found out. But for two preliminary days or so, his resources would serve; for he had plenty of excellent claret and Madeira—stuff I don't know much about—and both Jacob and himself condescended to manœuvre a little."

"The wine did not arrive. But the morning of Christmas Eve did. I was sitting in my room, trying to write a song for Kate—that's your mother, my dears——"

"I know, papa," said Effie, as if she were very knowing to know that.

"——when my uncle came into the room, looking like Sintram with Death and the Other One after him—that's the nonsense you read to me the other day, isn't it, Effie?"

"Not nonsense, dear papa," remonstrated Effie; and I loved her for saying it, for surely *that* is not nonsense."

"I didn't mean it," said my father; and turning to my mother, added: "It must be your fault, my dear, that my children are so serious that they always take a joke for earnest. However, it was no joke with my uncle. If he didn't look like Sintram he looked like t'other one."

"The roads are frozen—I mean snowed up," he said. "There's just one bottle of port left, and what Captain Calker will say—I dare say I know, but

I'd rather not. Damn this weather!—God forgive me!—that's not right—but it *is* trying—aint it, my boy?

“‘What will you give me for a dozen of port, uncle?’ was all my answer.

“‘Give you? I'll give you Culverwood, you rogue.’

“‘Done,’ I cried.

“‘That is,’ stammered my uncle, ‘that is,’ and he reddened like the funnel of one of his hated steamers, ‘that is, you know, always provided, you know. It wouldn't be fair to Lady Georgiana, now, would it? I put it to yourself—if she took the trouble, you know. You understand me, my boy?’

“‘That's of course, uncle,’ I said.

“‘Ah! I see you're a gentleman like your father, not to trip a man when he stumbles,’ said my uncle. For such was the dear old man's sense of honour; that he was actually uncomfortable about the hasty promise he had made without first specifying the exception. The exception, you know, has Culverwood at the present hour, and right welcome he is.

“‘Of course, uncle,’ I said—‘between gentlemen, you know. Still, I want my joke out, too. What will you give me for a dozen of port to tide you over Christmas Day?’

“‘Give you, my boy? I'll give you——’

“‘But here he checked himself, as one that had been burned already.

“‘Bah!’ he said, turning his back, and going towards the door; ‘what's the use of joking about serious affairs like this?’

“And so he left the room. And I let him go. For I had heard that the road from Liverpool was impassable, the wind and snow having continued every day since that night of which I told you. Meantime, I had never been able to summon the courage to say one word to your mother—I beg her pardon, I mean Miss Thornbury.

“Christmas Day arrived. My uncle was awful to behold. His friends were evidently anxious about him. They thought he was ill. There was such a hesitation about him, like a shark with a bait, and such a flurry, like a whale in his last agonies. He had a horrible secret which he dared not tell, and which yet *would* come out of its grave at the appointed hour.

“Down in the kitchen the roast beef and turkey were meeting their deserts. Up in the store-room—for Lady Georgiana was not above housekeeping, any more than her daughter—the ladies of the house were doing their part; and I was oscillating between my uncle and his niece, making myself amazingly useful now to one and now to the other. The turkey and the beef were on the table, nay, they had been well eaten, before I felt that my moment was come. Outside, the wind was howling, and driving the snow with soft pats against the window-panes. Eager-eyed I watched General Fortescue, who despised sherry or Madeira even during dinner, and would no more touch champagne than he would *eau sucrée*, but drank port after fish or with cheese indiscriminately—with eager eyes I watched how the last bottle dwindled out its fading life in the clear decanter. Glass after glass was supplied to General Fortescue by the fearless cockswain, who, if he might have had his choice,

would rather have boarded a Frenchman than waited for what was to follow. My uncle scarcely ate at all, and the only thing that stopped his face from growing longer with the removal of every dish was that nothing but death could have made it longer than it was already. It was my interest to let matters go as far as they might up to a certain point, beyond which it was not my interest to let them go, if I could help it. At the same time I was curious to know how my uncle would announce—confess the terrible fact that in his house, on Christmas Day, having invited his oldest friends to share with him the festivities of the season, there was not one bottle more of port to be had.

"I waited till the last moment—till I fancied the admiral was opening his mouth, like a fish in despair, to make his confession. He had not even dared to make a confidante of his wife in such an awful dilemma. Then I pretended to have dropped my table-napkin behind my chair, and rising to seek it, stole round behind my uncle, and whispered in his ear:

"'What will you give me for a dozen of port now, uncle?'

"'Bah!' he said, 'I'm at the gratings; don't torture me.'

"'I'm in earnest, uncle.'

"He looked round at me with a sudden flash of bewildered hope in his eye. In the last agony he was capable of believing in a miracle. But he made me no reply. He only stared.

"'Will you give me Kate? I want Kate,' I whispered.

"'I will, my boy. That is, if she'll have you. That is, I mean to say, if you produce the true tawny.'

"'Of course, uncle; honour bright—as port in a storm,' I answered, trembling in my shoes and everything else I had on, for I was not more than three parts confident in the result.

"The gentlemen beside Kate happening at the moment to be occupied, each with the lady on his other side, I went behind her, and whispered to her as I had whispered to my uncle, though not exactly in the same terms. Perhaps I had got a little courage from the champagne I had drunk; perhaps the presence of the company gave me a kind of mesmeric strength; perhaps the excitement of the whole venture kept me up; perhaps Kate herself gave me courage, like a goddess of old, in some way I did not understand. At all events I said to her:

"'Kate,—we had got so far even then—my uncle hasn't another bottle of port in his cellar. Consider what a state General Fortescue will be in soon. He'll be tipsy for want of it. Will you come and help me to find a bottle or two?'

"She rose at once, with a white-rose blush—so delicate I don't believe any one saw it but myself. But the shadow of a stray ringlet could not fall on her cheek without my seeing it.

"When we got into the hall, the wind was roaring loud, and the few lights were flickering and waving gustily with alternate light and shade across the old portraits which I had known so well as a child—for I used to think what each would say first, if he or she came down out of the frame and spoke to me.

"I stopped, and taking Kate's hand, I said—

"I daren't let you come farther, Kate, before I tell you another thing: my uncle has promised, if I find him a dozen of port—you must have seen what a state the poor man is in—to let me say something to you—I suppose he meant your mamma, but I prefer saying it to you, if you will let me. Will you come and help me to find the port?"

"She said nothing, but took up a candle that was on a table in the hall, and stood waiting. I ventured to look at her. Her face was now celestial rosy red, and I could not doubt that she had understood me. She looked so beautiful that I stood staring at her without moving. What the servants could have been about that not one of them crossed the hall, I can't think.

"At last Kate laughed and said—'Well?' I started, and I daresay took my turn at blushing. At least I did not know what to say. I had forgotten all about the guests inside. 'Where's the port?' said Kate. I caught hold of her hand again and kissed it."

"You needn't be quite so minute in your account, my dear," said my mother, smiling.

"I will be more careful in future, my love," returned my father.

"What do you want me to do?" said Kate.

"Only to hold the candle for me," I answered, restored to my seven senses at last; and, taking it from her, I led the way, and she followed, till we had passed through the kitchen and reached the cellar-stairs. These were steep and awkward, and she let me help her down."

"Now, Edward!" said my mother.

"Yes, yes, my love, I understand," returned my father.

"Up to this time your mother had asked no questions; but when we stood in a vast, low cellar, which we had made several turns to reach, and I gave her the candle, and took up a great crowbar which lay on the floor, she said at last—

"Edward, are you going to bury me alive? or what *are* you going to do?"

"I'm going to dig you out," I said, for I was nearly beside myself with joy, as I struck the crowbar like a battering-ram into the wall. You can fancy, John, that I didn't work the worse that Kate was holding the candle for me.

"Very soon, though with great effort, I had dislodged a brick, and the next blow I gave into the hole sent back a dull echo. I was right!

"I worked now like a madman, and, in a very few minutes more, I had dislodged the whole of the brick-thick wall which filled up an archway of stone and curtained an ancient door in the lock of which the key now showed itself. It had been well greased, and I turned it without much difficulty.

"I took the candle from Kate, and led her into a spacious region of sawdust, cobweb, and wine-fungus.

"There, Kate!" I cried, in delight.

"But," said Kate, "will the wine be good?"

"General Fortescue will answer you that," I returned, exultantly. "Now come, and hold the light again while I find the port-bin."

"I soon found not one, but several well-filled port-bins. Which to choose I could not tell. I must chance that. Kate carried a bottle and the candle, and I carried two bottles very carefully. We put them down in the kitchen with orders they should not be touched. We had soon carried the dozen to the hall-table by the dining-room door.

"When at length, with Jacob chuckling and rubbing his hands behind us, we entered the dining-room, Kate and I, for Kate would not part with her share in the joyful business, loaded with a level bottle in each hand, which we carefully erected on the sideboard, I presume, from the stare of the company, that we presented a rather remarkable appearance—Kate in her white muslin, and I in my best clothes, covered with brick-dust, and cobwebs, and lime. But we could not be half so amusing to them as they were to us. There they sat with the dessert before them but no wine-decanter forthcoming. How long they had sat thus, I have no idea. If you think your mamma has, you may ask her. Captain Calker and General Fortescue looked positively white about the gills. My uncle, clinging to the last hope, despairingly, had sat still and said nothing, and the guests could not understand the awful delay. Even Lady Georgiana had begun to fear a mutiny in the kitchen, or something equally awful. But to see the flash that passed across my uncle's face, when he saw us appear with *ported arms*! He immediately began to pretend that nothing had been the matter.

"What the deuce has kept you, Ned, my boy?" he said. 'Fair Hebe,' he went on, 'I beg your pardon. Jacob, you can go on decanting. It was very careless of you to forget it. Meantime, Hebe, bring that bottle to General Jupiter, there. He's got a corkscrew in the tail of his robe, or I'm mistaken.'

"Out came General Fortescue's corkscrew. I was trembling once more with anxiety. The cork gave the genuine plop; the bottle was lowered; *glug, glug, glug*, came from its beneficent throat, and out flowed something tawny as a lion's mane. The general lifted it lazily to his lips, saluting his nose on the way.

"Fifteen! by Gyeove!" he cried. 'Well, Admiral, this *was* worth waiting for! Take care how you decant that, Jacob—on peril of your life.'

"My uncle was triumphant. He winked hard at me not to tell. Kate and I retired, she to change her dress, I to get mine well brushed, and my hands washed. By the time I returned to the dining-room, no one had any questions to ask. For Kate, the ladies had gone to the drawing-room before she was ready, and I believe she had some difficulty in keeping my uncle's counsel. But she did.—Need I say that was the happiest Christmas I ever spent?"

"But how did you find the cellar, papa?" asked Effie.

"Where are your brains, Effie? Don't you remember I told you that I had a dream?"

"Yes. But you don't mean to say the existence of that wine-cellar was revealed to you in a dream?"

"But I do, indeed. I had seen the wine-cellar built up just before we left

for Madeira. It was my father's plan for securing the wine when the house was let. And very well it turned out for the wine, and me too. I had forgotten all about it. Everything had conspired to bring it to my memory, but had just failed of success. I had fallen asleep under all the influences I told you of—influences from the region of my childhood. They operated still when I was asleep, and, all other distracting influences being removed, at length roused in my sleeping brain the memory of what I had seen. In the morning I remembered not my dream only, but the event of which my dream was a reproduction. Still, I was under considerable doubt about the place, and in this I followed the dream only, as near as I could judge.

"The admiral kept his word, and interposed no difficulties between Kate and me. Not that, to tell the truth, I was ever very anxious about that rock ahead; but it was very possible that his fastidious honour or pride might have occasioned a considerable interference with our happiness for a time. As it turned out, he could not leave me Culverwood, and I regretted the fact as little as he did himself. His gratitude to me was, however, excessive, assuming occasionally ludicrous outbursts of thankfulness. I do not believe he could have been more grateful if I had saved his ship and its whole crew. For his hospitality was at stake. Kind old man!"

Here ended my father's story, with a light sigh, a gaze into the bright coals, a kiss of my mother's hand which he held in his, and another glass of Burgundy.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

CONVENT-ROBBING.

MAY MARGARET felt a cold cloud come down on her:

They made her a nun and put a black gown on her;

Young Roland went white

Thro' the winter moonlight,

Looming tall in the breath of the frost every night,

And gazed at the Convent, and plann'd how to win her there,

And his cheek gather'd dew till the dawn, and grew thinner there.

"A ruse, ho, a ruse!" cried his brother, Clerk John, to him,

When in vain both the monks and the leeches had gone to him,—

"Cease to fume and to frown,

Close thine eyes, lie thee down,

Stretch thee straight on a bier in thy chilly death-gown;

The great bell shall ring, and thy house gather gloom in it,

While I'll to the Convent, and beg thee a tomb in it!"

The Convent bell tolls, hung with black are the porches there,
Come tall black pall-bearers and pages with torches there,
Then the bier,—and thereon
The pale youth dead and gone;
And behind, grim as Death, weeping sore, goes Clerk John;
And the chapel is black, as the bearers pace slow in it,
And all the black nuns stand with lights in a row in it.

Ah! chill is the chapel, the great bell chimes weary there,
Black bearers, black nuns, and black pages, look dreary there;
The youth lies in death,
Not a murmur he saith;
But the tiny frost-cloud on his lips is his breath,—
And he who dared touch his cold cov'ring might feel beneath,
The glittering scales of a bosom of steel beneath!

Ho she screameth,—May Margaret! kneels by the side of him!—
“White Mary above, be the guardian and guide of him!
They parted us twain,
To their shame, to our pain,
And ah! that so soon I should clasp him again!”
Wan, wan, is her cheek, with dim torch-light the while on it—
Does she dream? . . Has the face changed? . . and is there a smile on it?

She holds his cold hand to her heart, and doth call on him,
Drop by drop, warm and scented, her tender tears fall on him;
The nuns, sable-gown'd,
Chanting low, stand around;
Clerk John bites his lips, with his eyes on the ground . .
“Dear heart, that we meet but in woe such as this again!”
How she kisses his lips!—Does she dream? . . Did he kiss again?

Who opens the door with a terrible shout at once?—
A great wind sweeps in, and the lights are blown out at once!
The Abbess screams low,
Moan the nuns in a row,
Thro' the gate on the wind drifts the sleet and the snow,
But the moon thro' the quaint-colour'd windows is beaming now,—
And wondrous bright shapes round the bier gather gleaming now!

The sable pall-bearers and pages are now amazed!
In armour that glitters like golden dew arrayed!
How chill the moon glows!
How it blows! how it snows!
Yet May Margaret's cheek is as red as a rose!
And “a miracle,” murmurs the Abbess holy now,
For shiningly vested the dead rises slowly now!

He draweth May Margaret's sweet blushing cheek to him,
She kisses him softly, yet strives not to speak to him ;

The nuns, sable-gown'd,
Shiver dismally round,

As he lifeth the great sable pall from the ground,
And turneth it deftly, and flingeth it over her,—
And a glittering mantle doth wondrously cover her !

To the door of the chapel their feet pass hollow now,
Clerk John and the rest very silently follow now ;

Hark ! is it the beat
Of horses' feet ?

Or the wild wind whistling in snow and in sleet ?
Down the aisles of the chapel the echoes die away,
While fast in the snow-storm the happy ones hie away !

"Saints," crieth the Abbess, "pour down your dole on us !
To take our sweet sister an angel hath stole on us !"

And the nuns in a row,
Murmur sly and low—

"Would such angels might come unto *us* also !"
And they look at the bier, with the tingle of sin on them,
And the moon blushes faintly, still glimmering in on them.

Ay, fast in the snow-storm gallop the lovers now !
Young Roland's warm castle their merriment covers now !

To the bower they have run,
For the bridal is done,

And the jolly old priest hath made them one :
"May all who love true," cries the youth, "win such kisses, dear,
Die such death,—and be tomb'd in a bower such as this is, dear !"

WALTER HUTCHESON.



